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Utopian spaces: Mormons and Icarians in Nauvoo, Illinois

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Utopian Spaces: Mormons and Icarians in Nauvoo, Illinois

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ABSTRACT PAGE

Nauvoo, Illinois was the setting for two important social experiments in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also known as the Mormons, made this city their headquarters of their rapidly expanding church from 1838 until 1846. Only three years after the departure of the Mormons, a group of Frenchmen calling themselves Icarians came to the same spot to realize a system of communal living and brotherhood that lasted in Nauvoo until 1856. While several studies have been devoted to these groups, as yet none have combined a study of the two communities who shared the same space.

This study focuses on the physical communities as envisioned by their leaders and as constructed and inhabited by the members of each group. In "reading" the city each community constructed at Nauvoo, we can understand their unique utopian agendas and how those were realized or compromised in the everyday living out of each groups' individual utopian vision. I offer one perspective, grounded in an interpretation of the cultural landscape of Nauvoo, which examines only a few of the numerous aspects of Mormon and Icarian society, including commitment mechanisms, ideological centers, leadership and authority, gender and conflict. This study seeks to compare the two communities at Nauvoo in ways that will not only elucidate their agendas and experiences, but will help shed light on the nature and experiences of utopian communities in general.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Illustrations	iii
Chapter I. Introduction	1
Chapter II. Utopian Space	8
Chapter III. Centers	57
Chapter IV. Texts and People in the Construction of Utopia	112
Chapter V. Structures of Authority	151
Chapter VI. Gender and Family	198
Chapter VII. Inside and Outside Nauvoo	244
Chapter VIII. Conclusion	292
Bibliography	301
Vita	329

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration	Page
1. View of Nauvoo	3
2. Daguerreotype of Nauvoo	5
3. Nauvoo from the Mississippi, Looking Down the River	14
4. Map of Nauvoo	29
5. Map of Icaria in Nauvoo	32
6. Map of Commerce and Nauvoo	35
7. Plat of Zion for Independence, Missouri	37
8. Daguerreotype of the Nauvoo Temple	68
9. Nauvoo Wards	73
10. William Weeks's Architectural Sketch of a Nauvoo Temple Column	76
11. Original Sunstone from the Nauvoo Temple	77
12. Interior of the Nauvoo Temple	80
13. Sketch of Baptismal Font	82
14. First Floor of the Nauvoo Temple	85
15. Third Floor of the Nauvoo Temple	85
16. Ad for the Temple	90
17. Icarian Property in Nauvoo	94
18. Temple Mormon de Nauvoo	95
19. Ruins of the Nauvoo Temple	98
20. Icarian Schoolhouse	100
21. Conjectural Drawing of the Icarian Refectory	107

22. Interior of the Icarian Refectory 107

23. Icarian Chair 108

24. Sketch of Buildings on Temple Square 110

25. Joseph Smith 156

26. Étienne Cabet 159

27. Cabet's House 191

28. Icarian Apartment Buildings 229

29. Floorplan of Icarian Apartments 229

30. Mormons Crossing the Mississippi on the Ice 245

31. View of Nauvoo from the West Bank of the Mississippi River 248

32. View of Nauvoo and the Temple from across the River 250

33. The Nauvoo House 253

34. Postcard of Nauvoo 254

35. La Colonie de Nauvoo 263

36. Heber C. Kimball Home 284

37. Icarian Communities in the United States 295

38. The Rebuilt Nauvoo Temple 296

39. The Mix Home 298

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On 4 February 1846 a train of covered wagons sheltering shivering families and holding their meager belongings stretched along the Illinois side of the Mississippi River. These were Mormons, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, forced to leave all they had built–the city Nauvoo, their temple, and their homes of seven years–never to return. As they faced the partially frozen Mississippi River and the Iowa shore on the other side, the Saints cast a parting glance back at their beloved city and temple. Priddy Meeks, one of the Mormon pioneers who left in the winter of 1846, wrote, "While crossing over a ridge seven miles from Nauvoo we looked back and took a last sight of the Temple we ever expected to see. We were sad and sorrowful." After the Mormons' departure, the city of Nauvoo, once a thriving, bustling city on the banks of the Mississippi, became what journalist Thomas Kane described as a "Dead City," consisting of empty houses, abandoned workshops, and the temple standing stark against the sky on the bluff overlooking the river.[1]

Nauvoo was only one in a succession of communities founded by Mormons, or members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church was officially organized in 1830 in upstate New York, following important visions by the prophet Joseph Smith and the publication of the Book of Mormon. Less than a year later, the

[1] Priddy Meeks quoted in Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company and Provo: BYU Press, 2002), 619.

focus shifted west to Kirtland, Ohio where the Mormon Saints were called to gather.[2] Thousands of believers eventually gathered to Kirtland where they built their first temple. Shortly after the announcement to gather in Ohio, Smith issued another revelation regarding the "land of the [Saints'] inheritance." Zion was "a land of promise . . . flowing with milk and honey."[3] Joseph Smith later declared that Zion was located at Independence, Missouri, and the Mormons began moving there with plans to build temples and a great city. Violent conflict in Missouri prevented the Saints from realizing their grandiose plans. At the end of 1833, they were expelled from Independence and Jackson County. The Saints moved to Clay County, where the cycle of persecution and flight was repeated. Three years later they moved to northern Missouri where a new county was created to accommodate the Mormons. After a brief hiatus, violence erupted again. Hostile Missourians burned Mormon farms and homes, killing and driving out believers. The Saints tried to defend themselves; they sought aid and redress from the government, but mobs drove them out, again in the middle of winter; this time they had to leave the state of Missouri altogether under threat of extermination.

Nearly destitute, sick and suffering, with their prophet in jail on trumped up charges of "murder, treason, burglary, arson, larceny, theft, and stealing," the Saints returned to the east and camped along the Mississippi River, where many were sheltered by residents of Quincy, Illinois.[4] Upon Smith's release in spring of 1839, he decided to relocate the Mormon community to a piece of swampy land along the Mississippi River

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[2] The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 37:3.
[3] The Doctrine and Covenants 38:18-19.
[4] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts. 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 3:315.

Figure 1 View of Nauvoo. Unknown artist, oil, 1848-1850. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

in Illinois. In spite of their previous failures in establishing communities in Ohio and Missouri, the Saints fell to city building in Illinois with enthusiasm. Nauvoo soon rose from the riverbank to become the second largest city in Illinois. In Nauvoo, Mormons expanded their Mormon missionary work, constructed another temple, and saw unprecedented growth of the church and some of its most significant doctrinal developments. However, the Mormons' seven-year stay there ended in tragedy. Joseph Smith and his brother were murdered by an angry mob, and the Saints were expelled once again from their homes. In spite of, and perhaps because of, the tragic end in Illinois, the

Nauvoo period is one of the most important and evocative eras in the history of the Mormon church.

While the Mormons were building their temple in Nauvoo, another movement was taking shape on the other side of the Atlantic. Étienne Cabet, French lawyer, publisher and political exile, published a utopian novel called *Voyage en Icarie* in 1839, the same year the Mormons arrived in Nauvoo. Cabet wrote that the purpose of Icaria was to clear the wilderness, to offer asylum to the downtrodden, and to establish a social organization that would promote the happiness of the human race. Cabet's proposed social organization was centered on the doctrine equality of education and opportunity for men and women of all classes, the realization of a community of goods and the practice of fraternity. Cabet believed that these elements would effectively end all social problems including poverty, criminality, violence, drunkenness, and divorce, to name only a few, while creating a society that enjoyed complete happiness and prosperity. *Voyage en Icarie* and other publications garnered Cabet an immense following, especially among the French working class. Initially Cabet did not have plans to make his piece of utopian fiction a reality, but pressure from his followers led to his announcement that Icaria, his version of utopia, would be located in Texas. In February 1848, sixty-nine men left to find paradise; others groups, including women, followed later that year. But conditions in Texas were inhospitable, and by the end of that same year the Icarians had abandoned the Texas venture and regrouped in New Orleans, where Cabet joined them. It was there that they first received news of Nauvoo, a ready-made city with plowed fields just a boat ride up the Mississippi.

Figure 2 Daguerreotype of Nauvoo, ca. 1846 by Lucian R. Foster. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

Three years after the Mormons' departure, the Icarians, self-styled "soldiers of humanity," came around a bend in the river and saw Nauvoo for the first time. Their first glimpse of Nauvoo, like the Saints' parting view, was dominated by the temple on the bluff, now reduced to a blackened shell. The homes were ramshackle and the gardens overrun, but on 15 March 1849 the Icarians greeted the sight of their new home with enthusiasm and optimism. Étienne Cabet, their leader, purchased the ruins of the temple and a couple of adjoining blocks with plans to create a model community. Nauvoo would become the "high peak" from which "republican, communitarian doctrine and [the]

evangelical principles of Fraternity of Men and People would be sent out."[5] The Icarians built a refectory, houses and workshops on the temple block. They farmed land that had been originally plowed by the Mormons. For a handful of years they lived quietly in Nauvoo. Then in 1856, conflict erupted. Two factions fought for legitimacy, control and the right to stay in Nauvoo. Cabet, founder of Icarianism, was cast out of the community with his followers. The remaining Icarians finally abandoned Nauvoo altogether in 1860 to begin yet another utopian venture in Iowa.

Scholars have often used a religious/secular classification or a success/failure taxonomy to categorize the scores of utopian communities that existed in nineteenth-century America. While such categories can be useful in understanding the utopian impulse, especially considering the number, complexity and diversity of utopian communities, this proclivity to categorize leads to an oversimplified picture of utopian impulses, agendas and experiences. Instead of using the common religious/secular and success/failure dichotomies to evaluate and understand these two communities, this study focuses on the physical communities themselves as envisioned by their leaders and as constructed and inhabited by the members of each group. In "reading" the city each community constructed at Nauvoo, we can understand their unique utopian agendas and how those were realized or compromised in the everyday living out of each groups' individual utopian vision. The organization of space and the construction of buildings in Nauvoo offer tangible, readable evidence of the real design and purpose of both communities. In understanding how people invested their time, energy, assets and emotions, we can evaluate these communities not by the bifurcated success/failure and

[5] *Le Populaire* (Paris), 7 April 1850.

religious/secular models, but rather by how well they achieved their own objectives, answered the needs of their members and influenced the general society.[6]

For the inhabitants of Nauvoo, building their city was about more than creating a home for themselves. In the act of creating their city and determining its nature, the Mormons and Icarians were creating and maintaining for themselves a distinct identity, shaping their own consciousness in a way that would define them and sustain them as a community even after their city was abandoned. The actual communities utopians constructed—the buildings and streets, homes and halls—are thus central rather than incidental to their agendas and eventual fates. The cities and towns of utopia provide a window into the objectives, experiences and influences of the communities. The elements contributing to these two communities were more than mere mechanisms; the economic programs, their lofty plans, the very houses, farms and workshops all presumed a greater purpose. The different purposes and plans of the Mormons and Icarians, their successes, struggles and eventual succumbing to stronger forces than themselves endow the sleepy town of Nauvoo, Illinois with special significance.

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[6] Donald E. Pitzer, "Introduction," *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. Donald E. Pitzer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 13.

CHAPTER 2

UTOPIAN SPACE

The two communities at Nauvoo were tangible, brick and mortar expressions of two very different ideologies. In spite of their differences, both communities share a common characteristic: their texts and ideologies were spatial in their orientation and founded on spatial and architectural metaphors. Joseph Smith adopted a spatial metaphor for his social and spiritual undertaking at Nauvoo. He and his followers were the modern-day House of Israel, laying the foundation of the Kingdom of God. Nauvoo was the "cornerstone" of this kingdom and would be "polished with the refinement which is after the similitude of a palace."[1] For Icar, Cabet's fictional model in *Voyage en Icarie*, the metaphor was less lofty: the construction of a house became a symbol for the restructuring of society: "It was in examining a stonecutter at work, and in reflecting on the steps taken by an architect to prepare to build a house, that he understood for the first time, how a entire country could be run."[2] Icar and Cabet both approached community building in a material way, focusing on the geography and architecture of utopia as a primary element in its perfection.

Space and a sense of place are common to almost all utopian communities, whether expressed in the fictional imagining of the nature and boundaries of a community or in its real-life enactment in physical space. Because the spatial is such a

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[1] The Doctrine and Covenants 124:2, 23.
[2] Étienne Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*. (Clifton, New Jersey: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973), 215.

common and fundamental element of utopian communities, it is often overlooked or taken for granted in studies or histories of these communities. Space is not a passive, abstract backdrop for human action, rather it is a production, a process and also a force in the lives of it inhabitants.[3] In other words, space is the product of human labor and the reflection of their dreams, desires and goals; but it in turn acts as an important social agent in the further development of that place and the people who inhabit it. Michael Keith and Steve Pile claim that space is fundamental and integral to any society: "Space is more than the outcome of social relations and more than one of the dimensions through which the social is constructed. It is an active, constitutive, irreducible, necessary component in the social's composition."[4] Space is an experiential entity, the product of living, thinking, feeling and relating.

Space is more than a stage whereon actors live their lives. Rather it is an "important archive of social experience and cultural meaning."[5] As cultural geographer J.B. Jackson declares, "Over and over again I have said that the commonplace aspects of the contemporary landscape, the streets and houses and fields and places of work, could teach us a great deal not only about American history and American society, but about ourselves and how we relate to the world."[6] While the spatial, especially the

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[3] Doreen Massey, "Politics of Space/Time," in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 146; Robert V. Hine, *Community on the American Frontier: Separate but Not Alone* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 21; Michael Keith and Steve Pile, "Introduction Part 1: The Politics of Place," in Keith and Pile, *Place and the Politics of Identity*, 2; Phillip E. Wegner, *Imaginary Communities: Utopia, the Nation, and the Spatial Histories of Modernity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2002), 11, 13.

[4] Michael Keith and Steve Pile, "Introduction Part 2: The Place of Politics," in Keith and Pile, *Place and the Politics of Identity*, 36.

[5] Glenn Rice and Michael A. Urban, "Where is River City, USA? Measuring Community Attachment to the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 24, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2006): 4; Paul Groth, "Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), 4.

[6] John Brinkerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1984), x.

commonplace, is often overlooked in history, it is an important and essential record because it is so taken for granted. The consideration of space in the utopian agenda is important, for one, because people are generally less self-conscious and therefore more truthful in the cultural record written on the landscape than in their written histories and records. As Pierce F. Lewis puts it, "Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears, in tangible, visible form. . . . All our cultural warts and blemishes are there, and our glories too; but above all, our ordinary day-to-day qualities are exhibited for anybody who wants to find them and knows how to look for them."[7] In utopian communities, space is a carefully constructed expression of the community's unique ideology; furthermore, it is a site of contestation and a force in the further development and defining of the community. American history, and specifically American utopian history, can thus be narrated in terms of imagined, constructed and contested spaces.

Current usage of the term "utopian" suggests the impossible, a chimera, a purely imaginary construction beyond our reach. The origin of the term and its generally accepted meaning is in Thomas More's 1516 work, which describes an ideal society in an imagined land. But Joseph Smith and Étienne Cabet believed that the ideal is not impossible and that all dreams are not mere chimeras. Mormons, Icarians and hundreds of others moved beyond the utopian device of fiction to form "intentional communities," groups of people that coalesced to realize their version of an ideal society, concomitantly participating in a critique of the existing social order and in an attempt to reform society

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[7] Pierce F. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D.W. Meining (New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), 12.

by providing a microcosmic model that could then be implemented on a larger scale.[8] As the Mormons and Icarians prove, utopian communities were diverse, but their varied methods were aimed at a shared goal—creating a better world.

Building a utopia is a way of telling, contesting and making history, of redefining society and negotiating between ideal and actual worlds. The utopian examination of society, whether fictional or in real life, is necessarily a spatial one. The genre that was defined by Thomas More's literary exploration of the New World is inherently spatial. The very word utopia, which literally translates to either "*no place*," or "*good place*," highlights the tension between the imaginary and the ideal and locates that tension in space, as emphasized in the prominence of *place*. More's work and hundreds of other utopian works are a means of exploring the boundaries of society and the nature of the ideal world. As blueprints of the ideal, fictional utopias are implicit or explicit critiques of existing society and a new way of imagining society in largely spatial ways. For example, More's *Utopia* blamed current social problems of British society on the English enclosure acts that divided up open spaces into private fields. Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, published nearly three centuries after More's work, is a spatial and social exploration of modern Boston, including a description of communal kitchens and stores. The utopian enterprise is thus not only a way of imagining and reforming society, but it is also a way of imagining and reshaping space.[9]

Such imagined communities became the bedrock for the actual communities built around the world and across America. Groups such as the Icarians and the Mormons were

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[8] Timothy Miller, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth Century America: Volume 1: 1900-1960* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse UP, 1998).
[9] Wegner, 59.

involved in converting fiction into fact as they established their communities and attempted to transform society. Like the fictional utopias, the realization of actual communities is necessarily spatial, taking ideology and enacting it in physical space. Paul Stars and John Wright claim that, "Places are humanized landscapes, an ultimate artifact of cultural aspiration, and the transformation of space into place is a compelling vernacular record of an ongoing quest for order and community."[10] The hundreds of utopian communities in nineteenth-century America were engaged in this quest for order and community, which they envisioned differently but enacted spatially. The streets, houses, workshops and fields of each community were not mere mechanisms or physical necessities; rather they presumed a greater purpose and continue to speak of the projects, plans, successes and struggles of the individual communities who shaped them.

Among the hundreds of utopian enterprises in nineteenth-century America, Nauvoo is unique because it was the site of two successive and very different communities. Nauvoo is a valuable archive of utopian space for two reasons. First, Nauvoo showed very little evidence of human activity before the Mormons' arrival; Joseph Smith described it as "literally a wilderness" on the edge of the American frontier.[11] Nauvoo's first permanent white settler arrived in the area in 1823, a mere sixteen years before the Mormons arrived there. By 1839 when the Mormons began to build their city, the peninsula that would become the city of Nauvoo was still an overgrown marsh containing only six rude houses.[12] This allowed its inhabitants to build a community from scratch, so we can see the construction of community as a process by

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[10] Paul F. Starrs and John B. Wright, "Utopia, Dystopia, and Sublime Apocalypse in Montana's Church Universal and Triumphant," *The Geographical Review* 95 no. 1 (January 2005): 97.
[11] Joseph Smith's journal entry, 11 Jun 1839, Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:375.
[12] *History of Hancock County, Illinois* (Hancock County, IL: Board of Supervisors, 1968), 393.

which each group shaped space in specific ways and concomitantly fashioned their own identity. Second, as the site of two different utopian communities with widely divergent ideologies and agendas, Nauvoo reveals how the same physical geography can be molded to very different ends and how the actual constructed community profoundly affected the fate of the two groups who made their home there. Their unique experiences illustrate Christian Norberg-Schulz's claim that, "the structure of a place is not a fixed, eternal state," and that "that any place ought to have the 'capacity' of receiving *different* 'contents,' naturally within certain limits. A place which is only fitted for one particular purpose would soon become useless."[13] Nauvoo's interest lies largely in its capacity of receiving two very different contents. How the two communities at Nauvoo shaped their surroundings allows insight into not only their agendas and experiences, but provides a framework for understanding and evaluating other utopian experiments as well, as space is a common element among even the most diverse utopian communities.

Surprisingly, the two communities that shared the same space and were separated by only a few short years have not been compared in any meaningful way. History and historians for the most part have a myopic vision of Nauvoo; hundreds of histories, studies and articles have been written about Mormon Nauvoo, due in large part to the unique American nature of this group and to its continuing growth. However, studies of Mormonism generally follow the Saints west to Salt Lake City in 1846, and little has been written about Nauvoo after the Mormon exodus. Yet Nauvoo is fully understood only when its continuing history is taken into account.

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[13] Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 18.

The Icarians who entered Nauvoo three years after the Mormon exodus are the subject of only a few largely indiscriminate and surface historical accounts; several studies on American utopian communities contain a few paragraphs about the Icarian experiment, a passing reference in the context of better-known utopian communities.[14] French scholars focus largely on the movement's founder, Étienne Cabet, and on Icarianism's early years in France before their 1848 departure for the United States. Because available Icarian sources are almost exclusively in French, with a few exceptions, American scholars seem to have largely neglected the French inhabitants of

Figure 3 Nauvoo from the Mississippi, Looking Down the River. Engraving, Gleason's Pictorial Magazine, 22 July 1854. Lillian Snyder Private Collection. Published at the peak of Icarianism in Nauvoo, this engraving shows the prevailing tendency to overlook the Icarian presence there and focus on the Mormon imprint, especially the temple, which was by then in ruins.

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[14] For example, see Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States From Personal Observations* (New York: Dover, 1966); Charles Gide, *Communist and Co-operative Colonies*, trans. Ernest F. Row (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1928); Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976); Donald E. Pitzer, ed. *America's Communal Utopias* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

Nauvoo.[15] This oversight or deliberate effacing of actors is not new; even while the Icarians were at their peak in Nauvoo contemporary descriptions and illustrations tended to overlook the Icarian presence and focused instead on the unique Mormon imprint left on the city. This study seeks, in part, to rescue the Icarians from their shadowy place in history and to compare the two communities at Nauvoo in ways that will not only elucidate their agendas and experiences, but will help shed light on the nature and experiences of utopian communities in general.

The study of utopian communities has commonly been bifurcated into long-standing categories of sacred and secular and successful and unsuccessful.[16] It is perhaps convenient to distinguish the Mormons and Icarians solely along the religious-secular divide that is so common in histories of nineteenth-century religious communities. Yet these two communities defy an easy bifurcation into religious and secular and highlight the problematic nature of this convenient classification. Utopian histories include Icarianism as a secular utopian community, and indeed the Icarians considered themselves non-religious. Yet Cabet himself called Icarianism and communalism a religion, although his definition of religion differs from other accepted definitions: "The word Religion means to bind. A religion is a tie between men who have the same opinion, the same ideas, the same belief. . . . Religion is thus a tie either between Man

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[15] Notable exceptions include Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France: Cabet and the Icarians, 1839-1851* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1974); Robert P. Sutton, *Les Icariens: The Utopian Dream in Europe and America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Diana M. Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).

[16] Histories of utopian communities are often divided into religious and secular sections. For example, see Robert Sutton, *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Religious Communities, 1732-2000* (Wesport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003) and the second volume *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Secular Communities, 1824-2000.* (Wesport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004). See also Morris Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United* States, 5th ed. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965).

and a Divinity, or between Men who adopt the same God."[17] To further complicate their classification as a secular community, Icarians believed in God, as the "supreme being or creator, and . . . Father of the Human Race."[18] One of their most important texts and a required part of every Icarian's library was a book by Étienne Cabet entitled *True Christianity*. They employed religious rhetoric, including baptism, catechism, faith, and salvation, to describe their community and beliefs. And they (consciously or unconsciously) incorporated elements of organized religion into their community including Sunday meetings, monastic silence during meals and the separation of sexes in their school.[19] On the other hand, while Mormonism is accepted as unproblematically religious, the communities the Mormons constructed in Nauvoo and elsewhere were not purely focused on otherworldly ends, but they were also important economic, political and social undertakings.

Most utopian histories don't include any definitions or criteria for the categories of religious and secular, assuming that these terms are self-evident. Religious and secular are difficult if not impossible to define precisely, as Catherine Albanese asserts, and as the two communities at Nauvoo demonstrate. Albanese divides religion into ordinary and extraordinary religion, categories which are useful in understanding Mormons and Icarians. Extraordinary religion is "specific and particular, easily recognized as religion, and possible to separate from the rest of culture." It includes religious forms and rites,

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[17] Étienne Cabet, *Le Vrai Christianisme suivant Jesus-Christ* (Paris: Bureau du Populaire, 1846), 317. See also Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 279.

[18] Fernand Rude, *Voyage en Icarie: deux ouvriers viennois aux États-Unis en 1855* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952), 257.

[19] *Le Populaire*, 5 September 1847; Étienne Cabet, *Almanach Icarien Astronomique, Scientifique, Pratique, Industriel, Statistique pour 1843* (Paris: Prevot, bureau du Populaire, 1843), 167; Étienne Cabet, "Ce que je ferais si j'avais Cinq Cent Mille Dollars" (Paris: l'Auteur, 1854), St. Louis Public Library Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

language and practices. Mormonism fits well within this model. Icarianism is better described by "ordinary religion," which is implicit and resists precise definition. It is "the taken for granted reality we all assume," a group's worldview that reveals itself in customs, values and norms. Albanese's consideration of both types of religion is grounded in space: "Religion concerns the way to locate oneself in space through the arrangement of sacred rites and holy places as boundary markers." It concerns location in time as well as space, and this location involves "staking out a claim on the landscape of identity."[20] This study seeks to examine both the extraordinary and ordinary religious systems of the Mormons and Icarians through a careful examination of space and how it reflected or resisted each community's beliefs.

The success/failure dichotomy is not entirely useful either in examining utopian communities, although a quick glance at history confirms that Mormons long outlasted the Icarians. The successful/unsuccessful taxonomy is often based on quantifiable criteria such as number of members, longevity and material prosperity. According to these criteria, scholars have often asserted that religious communities have been "beyond doubt" the most successful, while the non-religious communities were short-lived and faced constant difficulties, although the reasons for the difference are not always clear.[21] The eventual fates of the Mormons and Icarians support this premise. The Icarian community, under its various incarnations, peaked at a membership of approximately five hundred and lasted fifty years, making it one of the longest secular experiments in

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[20] Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*. 3rd ed (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2006), 5-7.

[21] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1972); Hillquit, 125; Émile Vallet, *An Icarian Communist in Nauvoo* (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Society, 1971), 10; Gide, 12, 214.

American history. The Mormons are now approaching their 180th year and number over thirteen million members, although they survive as a church and not a communal experiment. However, this means of evaluation does not take into account the experiences of the hundreds of individual community members that formed the fabric of their respective communities. The long-term success or failure of a community should not overshadow the importance of a community or the people who belonged to it.

This study is an attempt to move beyond these traditional categories and to examine the Mormons and Icarians according to their own agendas, to see how well each community realized their own objectives and incorporated their ideals, beliefs and values in the actual communities they constructed. Examining space and each group's physical community allows us to move beyond restrictive and problematical binaries to understand how well the Mormons and Icarians integrated ideology, space and lived experience within the community and how the degree of integration affected each community's group identity and eventual fates.

What follows is an exercise in "reading" the communities at Nauvoo. If landscapes are the "symbolic environments created by human acts of conferring meaning to nature and the environment," then landscape is legible, and we can find meaning in the very stones, bricks, streets and fields of various societies.[22] Reading utopian spatial constructions and cities is one means of understanding the values, beliefs, agendas and conflicts that shape a utopian community and its individual inhabitants. Moreover, the founders and members of the communities at Nauvoo intended that the city be legible as a mortar and bricks sermon in their unique utopian philosophy. The various aspects of the

[22] T. Greider and L. Garkovich, "Landscapes: The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment," *Rural Sociology* 59 no. 1 (1994): 1.

city under both of its inhabitants—the grid system, the prominence of a center, the houses, and public buildings—became a physical and visual testimony of the validity of Mormonism and Icarianism and their visions of the world.[23]

Reading the landscape is not without its dangers. Unlike texts, landscape is not printed in black and white, and there is room for slippage and varied interpretations, which is one of the reasons that a consideration of space and landscape can be so productive. This is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the utopian communities in Nauvoo in the mid-nineteenth century, nor it is a definitive interpretation of the city and its inhabitants. Landscape makes ideology, or the implicit beliefs structuring a worldview, concrete and difficult, but not impossible, to challenge. Nor is landscape static; rather, as Don Mitchell points out, landscape is part of an ongoing relationship between people and place.[24] As we will see in the histories and fates of the communities at Nauvoo, space is also a site of resistance and contestation. The creation of meaning through space is a process and a production, but space also becomes a force that shapes society and offers multiple meanings and interpretations. As Michael Keith and Steve Pile argue, "simultaneously present in any landscape are multiple enunciations of distinct forms of space," some more powerful than others, but there are no absolute readings or interpretations of any single space.[25] I offer one perspective, grounded in an interpretation of the cultural landscape of Nauvoo, which examines only a few of the

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[23] C. Mark Hamilton, *Nineteenth-century Mormon Architecture and City Planning* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 24.
[24] Don Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 100, 102.
[25] Michael Keith and Steve Pile, "Introduction Part 1: The Politics of Place," Keith and Pile, 6.

numerous aspects of Mormon and Icarian society, including commitment mechanisms, ideological centers, leadership and authority, gender and conflict.[26]

Utopian Blueprints

Like many other utopian communities, both of the Nauvoo communities began not as embodied cities and societies but as textual explorations of the limits and boundaries of society, one scriptural, the other fictional. The imagined communities of utopian literature present characters that act and shape their environment and are thus an important and influential way of imagining space. But space is not just a stage and setting for characters and plot; it is an important element of the utopian ideal itself. Though the action and setting are often removed from reality, placed in a new world or a world apart, utopian literature contributes in important ways to imagining and shaping space in this world by exploring imaginatively the boundaries of society and the (spatial) nature of an ideal world.[27] Utopian texts often include detailed descriptions of physical geography and architecture—rivers, mountains, fields, cities, houses and workshops—to contrast with the disorder and decay of contemporary society and to provide concrete evidence of the superiority of the specific utopian system.

The communities at Nauvoo reveal two very different textual approaches to space and landscape, each of which were significant in defining the actual communities that took shape on the banks of the Mississippi River. The fundamental text of the Mormon

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[26] For more comprehensive histories of Mormon Nauvoo see Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise.* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo: BYU Press, 2002); Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965). Icarian studies include Robert P. Sutton, *Les Icariens: The Utopian Dream in Europe and America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur, Étienne Cabet* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1972).

[27] Wegner, xvii, 59.

movement, the Book of Mormon, does not provide a detailed blueprint of the ideal community, nor does it outline the layout of the city or include descriptions of houses or other buildings.[28] But a careful reading of the Book of Mormon does reveal a rather sophisticated ideology of place that reorients Biblical geography by focusing the sacred narrative of a branch of Israel in America. The Book of Mormon centers the story of its people in a place that had previously been on the margins of sacred history. It sacralizes the American continent by reorienting it as the center of sacred narrative and the site of God's dealings with his people. The Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith's later revelations identified America as a promised land, as the symbol of a covenant by which the Mormon Saints would be identified and recognized as God's chosen people.[29] The concept of land is central not only to the Book of Mormon but to the sense of identity and community it establishes. The word "land" or "lands" appear 1361 times in the course of the book; the only words that appear with more frequency are God (1681), Lord (1587) and people (1774).[30] The Mormon concept of covenant includes all three of these aspects—God, people and land—as the source of their identity and as the foundation of their social order. For the Mormons, then, America is more than virgin or sacred land; it is an actual physical symbol reflecting their identity and embodying the covenant made with God even as it reminds them of his promises to them as his chosen people. Nauvoo was thus more than a city of Saints; for its Mormon inhabitants it was part of the

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[28] The one exception is the temple, which is mentioned at least a dozen times throughout the book.
[29] Richard L. Bushman, "Joseph Smith's Many Histories," in "The Worlds of Joseph Smith," Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress, 5-6 May 2005, *BYU Studies* 44, no. 4 (2005): 15-16; Steven L. Olsen, "The Mormon Ideology of Place: Cosmic Symbolism of the City of Zion, 1830-1846," Ph.D. diss. (University of Chicago, 1985; reprint, Provo: Joseph Fielding Smith History/BYU Studies, 2002), 72-73.
[30] Olsen, 63-64.

Kingdom of God on the earth, evidence of their covenant relationship to God, their place in sacred history and their chosen status as God's Latter-day Saints.

The Book of Mormon reinforces the notion of sacred land and covenant people by focusing on a social order centered in cities and built upon a moral foundation. The Book of Mormon is the narrative of a city-building and urban people. The first characters in the Book of Mormon history, the prophet Lehi and his family, leave the city of Jerusalem for the new world where they consequently establish and gather to other cities. As the civilization grows and splits, they create new cities with various building techniques. The strong sense of place in the Book of Mormon is due, at least partly, to the recurring emphasis on cities and their relation to each other. The pattern of central cities with smaller satellites around it is established in the Book of Mormon with places such as Zarahemla, Bountiful, and Moroni. This same pattern is reflected in Nauvoo, which was seen as a central gathering place or hub which harbored the prophet of God with other "stakes of Zion" radiating out from the center as spokes from a wheel.[31]

Voyage en Icarie, the primary text of Icarianism, followed the more traditional utopian pattern of establishing a comprehensive blueprint of the nature and boundaries of a utopian society, including an exhaustive description of the physical landscape and the cities that were built upon it. In the introduction to his book Étienne Cabet states that he will describe a great nation organized as a *Communauté*; he informs his readers that he will take them "into its cities, its countries, its villages, its farms, on its roads, its railroads, its canals, its rivers; . . . into its workshops, schools, museums, public monuments, and theaters." He'll also show the reader their housing and furnishings, the

[31] Ibid., 57.

nation's "order and union, harmony and fraternity, virtue and happiness, which are the inevitable results of *la Communauté*."[32] Cabet devotes so much space to such details because he is convinced that everything in *Voyage*, especially the Icarian landscape and cities, speaks to the superiority of community and the Icarian system of fraternity, equality and order.

Like the Book of Mormon, *Voyage en Icarie* presents a strong sense of place, but Cabet focuses on space and boundaries to reinforce the central organizing principles of reason and order, rather than religion and covenant organization as foregrounded in the Book of Mormon. Like the Book of Mormon and other utopian texts, *Voyage* takes place in the New World, in a remote land that is accessed only by a long sea voyage. The novel's narrator, Carisdall, describes the Icarian landscape in glowing terms: the natural beauty of the scene is "ravishing" and is only enhanced by the Icarians' cultivation of the "smallest corner of land" to transform the country into an "immense and magnificent garden."[33] Cabet described Icaria as the perfect combination of natural beauty and the enlightened improvements of man's imposition of order and reason on the landscape. Throughout the remainder of the narrative Carrisdall regularly interrupts himself to praise the natural and manmade beauties of the Icarian landscapes, including sunsets, rivers, orchards and cities.[34]

For Cabet, the pinnacle of Icarian achievement and its principle beauty are the clean, orderly cities that dot the landscape: "All the streets . . . are straight, wide, perfectly clean, and embellished with sidewalks or rather porticos with columns. All the

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[32] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, iv.
[33] Ibid., 12.
[34] For example see Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 11, 16, 21, 42-43, 149-150.

houses . . . are charming, four floors, ornamented with balustrades, with elegant windows and doors, painted in various colors." Visitors to the city "were in ecstasies" over the "elegance of the houses, the beauty of the streets, the charm of the fountains and squares, the magnificence of the palaces and monuments."[35] But for Cabet, even this glowing picture was not enough to illustrate the perfection of Icaria. Cabet explicitly contrasts the perfections of Icaria to contemporary conditions in large European cities:

> The cities were almost all placed haphazardly, built irregularly and without a plan, were poorly situated and badly constructed. One could find several beautiful streets inhabited by the rich, but most of the streets were narrow, muddy, poorly aired, and unhealthy. . . . In the Capital, there were some magnificent edifices and wonderful neighborhoods; but they were for the pleasure of the rich at the expense of the rest of the country, and, next to this magnificence, were the most dirty and disgusting roads, as next to the most insolent opulence there existed the most hideous and distressing misery. The roads, almost all poorly and randomly placed, were often impassable, never designed for the convenience of the poor pedestrian, and presented a thousand dangers that could have been avoided.[36]

The city itself spoke volumes about the corruption and neglect of the government and about the unhappiness and misery of its people. As with Icaria under the enlightened Icar, one only need read the city to see the true state of the government, the people, and civilization in general. Cabet was certain that any reasonable person would read the cities of *Voyage*, the old one dirty and disordered, the new one a model of equality and reason, and see in it incontrovertible evidence of the wisdom of Cabet's communist vision. The physical setting of the new, restored Icaria is created through the exercise of human reason and stands as a testimony to the perfection and efficacy of the Icarian system.[37]

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[35] Ibid., 11.
[36] Ibid., 320.
[37] Elizabeth Ann Rogers, "The Housing and Family Life of the Icarian Colonies," MA Thesis (University of Iowa, 1973), 180, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University.

For Cabet, the land of Icaria, its buildings, roads, houses and farms, are all monuments to his system and the most important and effective propaganda for Icarianism.

Cabet expected the actual community at Nauvoo to be read in the same way as the imagined city of Icaria. Cabet encouraged the beautification of the refectory and esplanade in front of the common house to create "propaganda for the eyes, to show that we have order, cleanliness and taste."[38] Cabet also regularly included detailed reports in the Icarian newspaper *Le Populaire* and other Icarian publications about the progress of construction projects in Nauvoo, including the refectory, school and apartment houses. His newspaper articles to American papers often included an inventory of their buildings as evidence of the community's prosperity and industry. Cabet exultingly reported the visits of outsiders and often took them himself on tours of Icaria.[39] Cabet wrote in an article on the regulation of visitors that, "When a Colony is founded, organized and sufficiently developed, it will desire visitors because it is one of the most effective means of propaganda."[40] In Cabet's mind the city and buildings of Icaria almost literally speak to its visitors and stand as a powerful testimony to the success and truth claims of the community.

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[38] Étienne Cabet, "Réforme Icarienne" (Paris: L'auteur, 1853), 15, St. Louis Public Library Collection, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

[39] For example, see *Le Populaire*, 25 Mar, 20 May, 1 July 1849; also Étienne Cabet, "Opinion Icarienne sur le Mariage" (Paris: l'Auteur, 1855), 20, St. Louis Public Library Collection, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Étienne Cabet, "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 30 juin au 6 juillet 1850," mardi, 2 juillet, Étienne Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, Folder 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Robert P. Sutton, "An American Elysium: The Icarian Communities," in *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. Donald E. Pitzer, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 283; Claude Francis et Fernande Gontier, *Partons pour Icarie* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1983), 187.

[40] Étienne Cabet, "Règlement sur les Visites," *La Colonie Icarienne: Journal d'organisation sociale* 1, no. 3 (2 Aug 1854), 4, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 11 June 2008.

Mormon Nauvoo reveals the same goals of publicity and conversion as the Icarians. Joseph Smith saw his city as a means of convincing and converting those who visited it. Like Cabet, he welcomed visitors and often conducted them on tours of the city and the temple himself. In Smith's mind, the city he and his people had built on the banks of the Mississippi was a physical manifestation of the validity of Mormonism.[41] The temple was the focal point of the community, and Smith designated its location and architectural prominence so that it could be seen from the Mississippi River for miles. His project was apparently successful as numerous reports attest: "For some time many distinguished persons, from all parts of the United States and other places, have given Nauvoo a call and visited the Temple, now in such a rapid train of completion. Those who have waited upon these visitors inform us, that they all go away *satisfied*. Mormon glory speaks for itself."[42] Smith's fellow leaders were even more explicit in their view of the city's role as they often spoke of both the temple and the city of Nauvoo as a monument to the Saints' honesty, industry, patriotism and virtue.[43]

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[41] For example see Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1926), 317-337; "Visitors at the Temple, " *Nauvoo Neighbor* 3, no. 7 (18 June 1845), microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; C. Mark Hamilton, *Nineteenth-century Mormon Architecture and City Planning* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995), 24; Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas, "Introduction," in *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, eds. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 1.

[42] "Visitors at the Temple, " *Nauvoo Neighbor* 3, no. 7 (18 June 1845); see also descriptions of the temple in such varied newspapers as *Salem Advertiser and Argus*, 15 June 1843; *New York Spectator*, 9 Nov 1844; *New York Weekly Tribune*, 22 Nov 1845; *Utica Daily Gazette* [New York], 27 Sep 1845.

[43] *Times and Seasons* (1 Nov 1845), microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:463-464, 603.

Mapping Utopia

Because of the importance of the city to each movement's overall agenda, image and success, both Joseph Smith and Étienne Cabet drew up careful plans before actually embarking on city building. The plans and maps that governed the development of Nauvoo are important archives of information about the two groups that inhabited the city. Maps and city plans are more than visual representations of the physical landscape. First, maps document the founders' original intentions, their goals and priorities in community building. They also provide a concrete expression of the ideal against which one can measure the actual community that was constructed. Secondly, maps reflect a kind of cultural power because they both control thought and reflect and express values. As Richard Bushman asserts, "Maps and culture continually interact, the maps directing and controlling thought on one hand, and reflecting and expressing values on the other."[44] Organizing space into a system of lines and a matrix of buildings is a way of reshaping reality and asserting authority. Geographer David Harvey claims that producing a dominant image or map is a "power-laden act. . . . It is to force a singular discursive representational exercise upon multiple cartographies, to suppress difference and to establish homogeneity of representation."[45] For both Joseph Smith and Étienne Cabet, drawing up maps and defining the ideal city was much more than an abstract intellectual exercise. In reality, they were defining and reifying their vision, imposing their view of order and perfection on the world.

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[44] Richard Lyman Bushman, "Making Space for the Mormons," Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series, no. 2, 22 October 1996 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997), 3, 5, Special Collections, Merrill Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

[45] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 284.

One of the best-known and most detailed contemporary maps of Mormon Nauvoo depicts an orderly city laid out in regular blocks embraced by the curve of the Mississippi River. Several important components of Nauvoo are immediately evident in this 1842 map of the city. First, it reveals the prominence and importance of the Mississippi River as a major geographical force that literally defined the confines of the city of Nauvoo. The river was an important force in the fate of the city; this major highway provided easy access to the city, bringing in streams of converts, visitors and critics. It also facilitated the transport of goods to the city, most notably the supplies needed for the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. But it also complicated the realization of the ideal by fostering disease along its swampy banks and allowing critics and enemies easy access to the city. The sweeping curve of the river is in clear contrast to the careful geometrical patterns imposed on the land by Joseph Smith and his followers. The grid pattern consisted of straight lines and right angles oriented to the cardinal directions, and it clearly illustrates Smith's attempts to impose order and regularity on an otherwise unruly landscape.

While the map includes the typical elements of any map—natural features, streets, legend and key—what is interesting and arresting about this map are two inclusions unique to this map and to Mormonism. In the two left corners are insets of Joseph Smith and an architectural sketch of the Nauvoo Temple, highlighting the intimate connection between the Prophet Joseph Smith, the temple and the city of the Saints.[46] The inclusion of a portrait of Joseph Smith on the map of Nauvoo presages his enduring importance to the city that was eventually renamed the City of Joseph and was known even among non-

[46] "Map of the City of Nauvoo," by Gustavus Hill, 1842; (reprint, Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. 1971), Map Collection, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

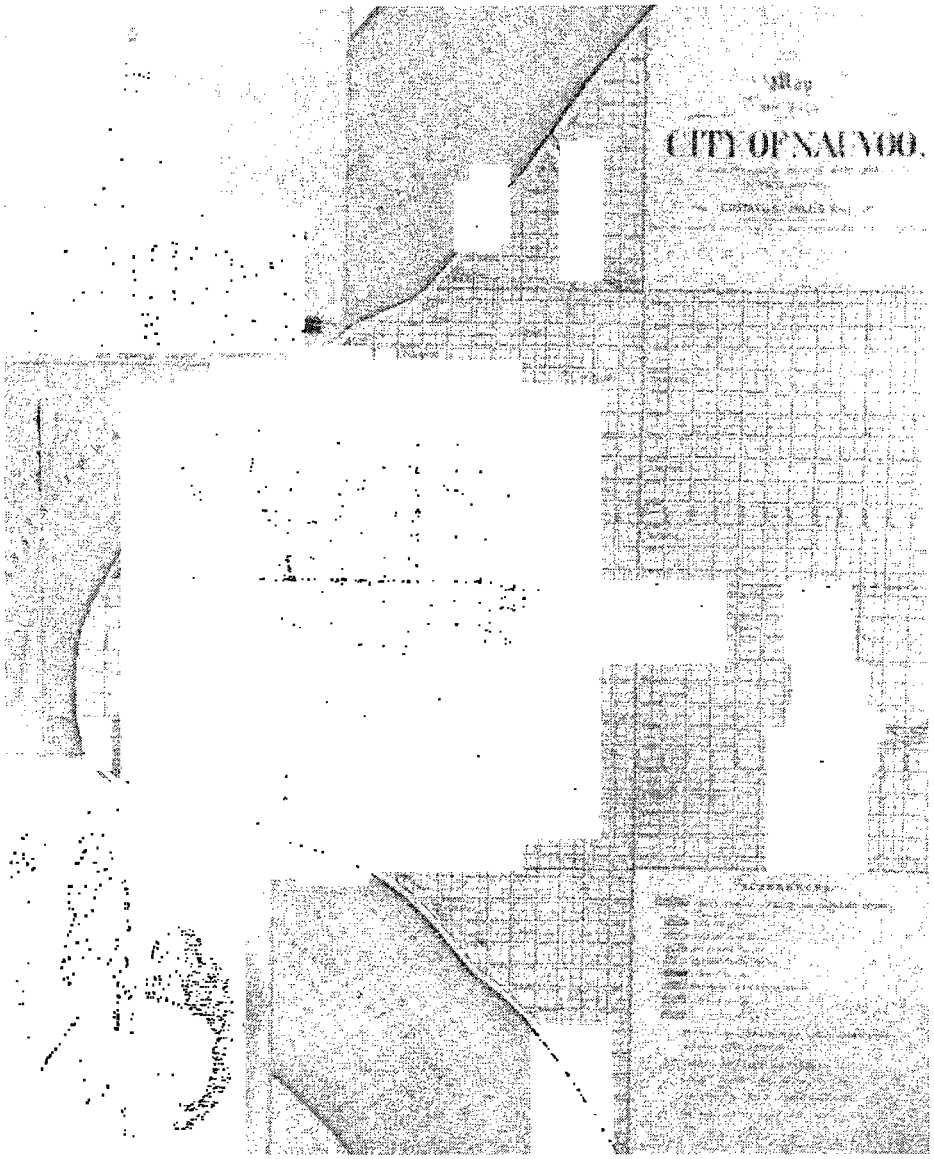

Figure 4 Map of Nauvoo, Gustavus Hills, 1842. Brigham Young University Map Collection.

Mormons as the city of the prophet.[47] Smith chose the site, renamed the city and platted the streets. His followers thought it only fitting that his image should be included on the map of what they considered his city. The second image, the temple, not only became the defining landmark of Nauvoo and the upper Mississippi, but its centrality to the city and to spatial concerns is emphasized by its representation on the official map of the city. The connection between the city of Nauvoo and the temple is made even more explicit in the inclusion of the 1842 map in the celestial room of the completed Nauvoo temple. Along with portraits of church leaders, the map was prominently displayed in the most important and symbolic room in the temple and is evidence of the importance of the physical city to the social and spiritual undertakings of the Saints.[48] The temple literally sacralized the city that contained it as the cornerstone of the kingdom of God and endowed the efforts of the Saints struggling to build it with eternal significance.

There was no actual printed map of Icaria in Nauvoo equivalent to the detailed map of the Mormon city. The only contemporary map of Icaria existed in Cabet's imagination and in the pages of *Voyage en Icarie*. For Cabet, *Voyage* was his blueprint and primary plan for a perfect city. The book begins with the narrator Carisdall examining a map of Icaria during his voyage. Upon seeing the map, Carisdall exclaims that everything is perfectly regular, and his companion and guide Eugène explains that everything in Icaria is laid out according to a predetermined plan. Carisdall examines successively the map of the country of Icaria, the maps of provinces, communes, the map of the capital city of Icara, and finally the map of a neighborhood within the city and the

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[47] For example see, "Correspondent of the *Richmond Palladium*," *The Nauvoo Neighbor*.
[48] Kimball, Heber C., *Journal of Heber C. Kimball*, book no. 90-93, typescript, 21-22, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

map of a single street. The narrator admires the beauty, order and perfection of each successive plan, and that perfection is only emphasized as Carisdall sees the real cities and streets that were represented on the maps.[49]

Icaria in Nauvoo was Cabet's sustained attempt to realize the fictional community he had outlined in *Voyage en Icarie*. *Voyage* was Cabet's master plan to be put into practice in Nauvoo, but for Cabet and the Icarians fact never fully followed fiction. In *Voyage en Icarie*, everything was first decided in detail on paper and then created on the landscape. When Icar came to power he completely changed the land. He identified the cities that were "poorly situated or badly built, those to be completely rebuilt and those which needed only to be repaired." He also noted "poorly placed roads and changes to be made, and did the same for canals and rivers, almost all of which had to be realigned and redug."[50] For Icar, and hence for Cabet, the layout and organization of cities was so important that they were willing to raze existing cities and start from scratch if necessary. The book goes on to describe how entire villages were relocated after having first drawn up a plan with squares, streets, monuments, etc. The remodelling of Icaria was not limited to cities and buildings, but extended into the natural landscape where even rivers were realigned to comply with Icar's vision of a nation of order, reason, and regularity.

Maps and plans were important to the Icarian enterprise, but more in fiction than in fact. Cabet created no map of the real Icaria in Illinois. While maps and plans were absolutely central to V*oyage*, they did not exist for the actual community at Nauvoo.[51]

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[49] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 20-22.
[50] Ibid., 366-367.
[51] The best map I have found of Icarian Nauvoo was made by Lillian Snyder, an Icarian descendent and scholar, who determined the location of various Icarian buildings based on extensive research and created a visual representation of the temple block which contained the most important Icarian buildings.

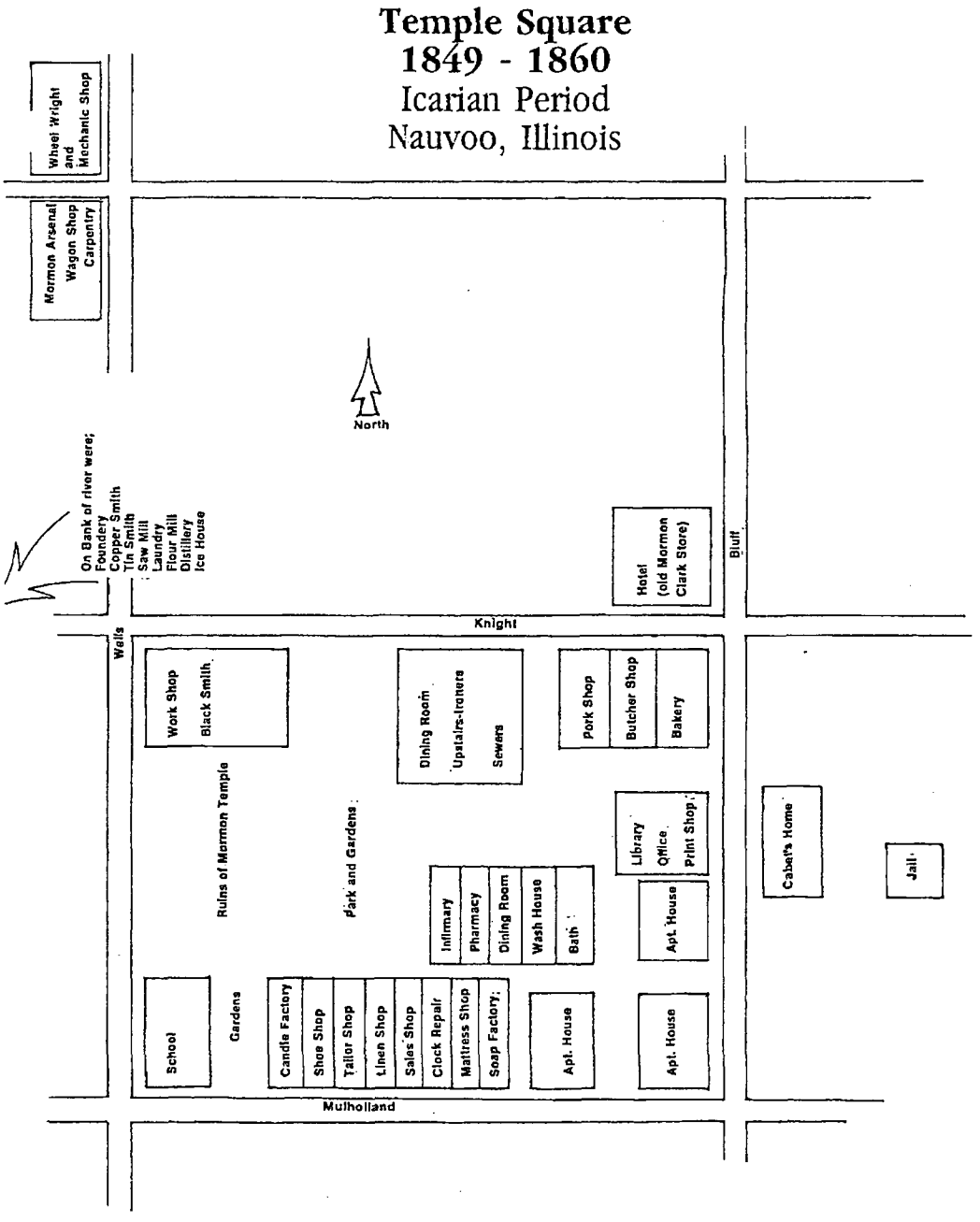

Figure 5 Map of Icaria in Nauvoo by Lillian Snyder. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

One reason for Cabet's reluctance to map the Illinois Icaria was that he inherited a ready-made community and was either constrained or content to make very few changes to make the city of Nauvoo match the ideal cities painted in his novel. Unlike Icar, Cabet didn't raze or even rename his city, but only modified the two city blocks the Icarians inhabited. Perhaps the blatant gap between the ideal painted in the novel and the reality of Nauvoo prevented Cabet from offering a visual illustration of the Icarian community in Illinois in the form of a map, but it is clear that the city he constructed fell far short of his ideal.

Cabet emphasized that "the Icarian Community is not built irregularly, by chance, according to the caprice of each, but according to a general plan, drawn up, discussed and adopted, according to locations, indicating squares, streets, houses, workshops, stores, public buildings, promenades, etc. All buildings, lodgings, workshops, stores, public monuments, will also be built according to specific plans discussed and adopted."[52] The city plan and building design in Icaria reveal a utilitarian philosophy to make efficient use of space and materials and to answer the specific needs of the Icarian community.[53] But Cabet was never able to realize the integration of ideology and practice that was so important and evident in Mormon maps and in the Mormon movement as a whole. Unlike Icar, his imaginary counterpart, and Joseph Smith, his real-life predecessor at Nauvoo, Cabet was never intimately integrated into the community he built, and he was eventually evicted from it. Nor did Icaria include an ideological and architectural

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[52] Étienne Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique: Sa Constitution, Ses Lois, Sa Situation matérielle et morale après le premier semestre 1855* (Paris: l'auteur, 1856; reprint, New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), 38.
[53] Rogers, 184.

equivalent to the temple that dominated the literal and symbolic landscape and that embodied the Icarian agenda.

The Icarians' limited modifications to the city of Nauvoo offer perhaps one reason for their limited success in the city. In her study of successful utopian communities, Rosabeth Moss Kanter asserts that one useful indicator of a successful community was whether a community built its own buildings and shaped the community it inhabited. The often difficult undertaking of constructing the physical city as planned fostered community through financial and physical struggles; moreover, it provided the community with physical symbols of their communal efforts that were invested with special meaning to its members.[54] The Mormons had to build their community almost from scratch. They worked together to dig ditches to drain the marshy land. When they arrived, there were six buildings within the "city" of Nauvoo; in 1846 they left more than two thousand buildings behind, many of them solid brick constructions. Through their efforts they literally reclaimed the swampy land and transformed the wilderness into a garden city. The Icarians' experience was very different from the Mormons'. The ease and appeal of inheriting a city ready-made arguably saved the Icarian movement from total defeat after their early debacle in Texas. When they regrouped in New Orleans to determine their fate, the Icarians were tired, poor and confused. Nauvoo, a completed town at the end of a relatively easy river voyage, seemed to offer salvation to the struggling community. But the Icarians spent most of their limited financial resources on

[54] Kanter, 79.

the temple and a few other buildings, leaving little for future growth and construction.[55] They were unable to actively shape Nauvoo to fit their unique vision of utopia. What had seemed their salvation may well have ended up being a major shortcoming to establishing a strong community.

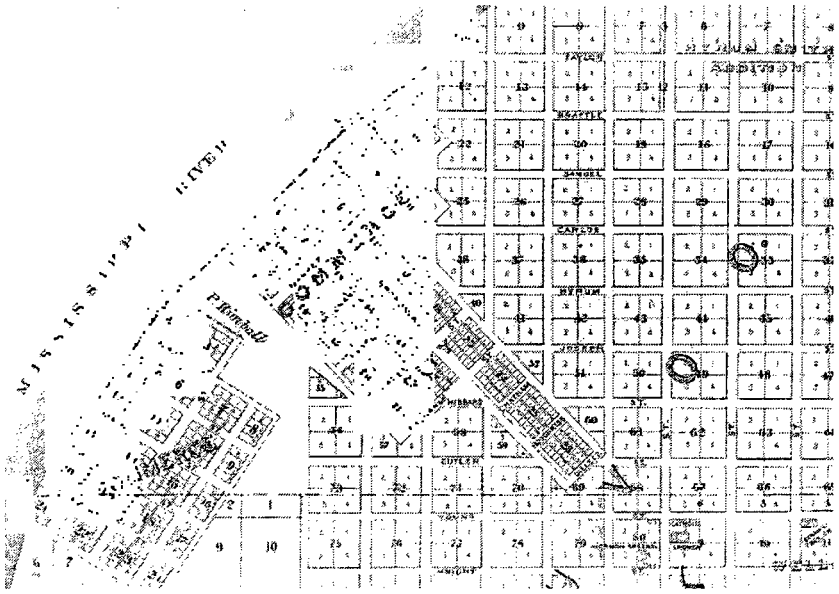

Figure 6 Map of Commerce and Nauvoo showing original platted city of Commerce and the replatted Nauvoo oriented toward the cardinal directions. Courtesy of LDS Church History Library/Archives.

Joseph Smith, on the other hand, took to city building with great enthusiasm and seemingly few inhibitions. When Joseph Smith arrived in Illinois, a "city," Commerce, already existed on the site of Nauvoo. Although Commerce existed only on paper, it had been planned and platted and awaited only interested and intrepid inhabitants. When Joseph Smith purchased the land, he immediately changed the name from the capitalistic Commerce to Nauvoo (which he said was Hebrew for "beautiful situation of rest") and

[55] Cabet spent roughly one-fourth of the Icarians' remaining $12,000 on Temple Square. See Diana M Garno, "Gendered Utopia: Women in the Icarian Experience, 1840-1898," Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1998, footnote, 490.

replatted the city, submitting the changes to the Hancock County Courthouse in August 1839.[56] The process of naming and shaping a place is one very effective way to transform mere space into meaningful place and to "manipulat[e] affective reactions and cultural markers to create a desired geographic meaning."[57] Smith's decision to rename and replat the city was significant as it endowed the space with meaning that was uniquely Mormon. The decision to replat the city carried perhaps more weight than the decision to rename it. Joseph Smith literally changed, if not the lay of the land, at least the representation of it. Smith based his plat of Nauvoo on an earlier plat developed for the city of Independence, Missouri. No detailed blueprints of city plats or layouts were contained in Mormon scripture, and the Plat of Zion developed for Independence was not given the status of a formal revelation, but Smith claimed that it was of divine origin.[58] The adoption and adaptation of the Plat of Zion in Nauvoo provided a sense of continuity for the Mormons who were forced to leave their homes in Missouri and settle in the swamps of Illinois, and it reinforced their faith in Joseph Smith as God's chosen prophet and as a city builder. Aspects of the plan important to Mormonism include the use of a square grid pattern, division into wards, central ecclesiastical buildings, including a temple, and the concentration of family dwellings in the city with an agricultural belt encircling it.[59]

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[56] Olsen, 232; *Church History in the Fulness of Times* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000), 217.

[57] Rice and Urban, 6-7.

[58] A note on one drawing reads, "For your satisfaction we inform you that the plot for the City and the size form and dimensions of the house were given us of the Lord." Matthew B. Brown and Paul Thomas Smith, *Symbols in Stone: Symbolism on the Early Temples of the Restoration* (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 1997), 22, 38; Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952), 35.

[59] Hamilton, 17; Joseph A. Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons: An Unfinished Experiment in Economic Organization* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1924), 90-92.

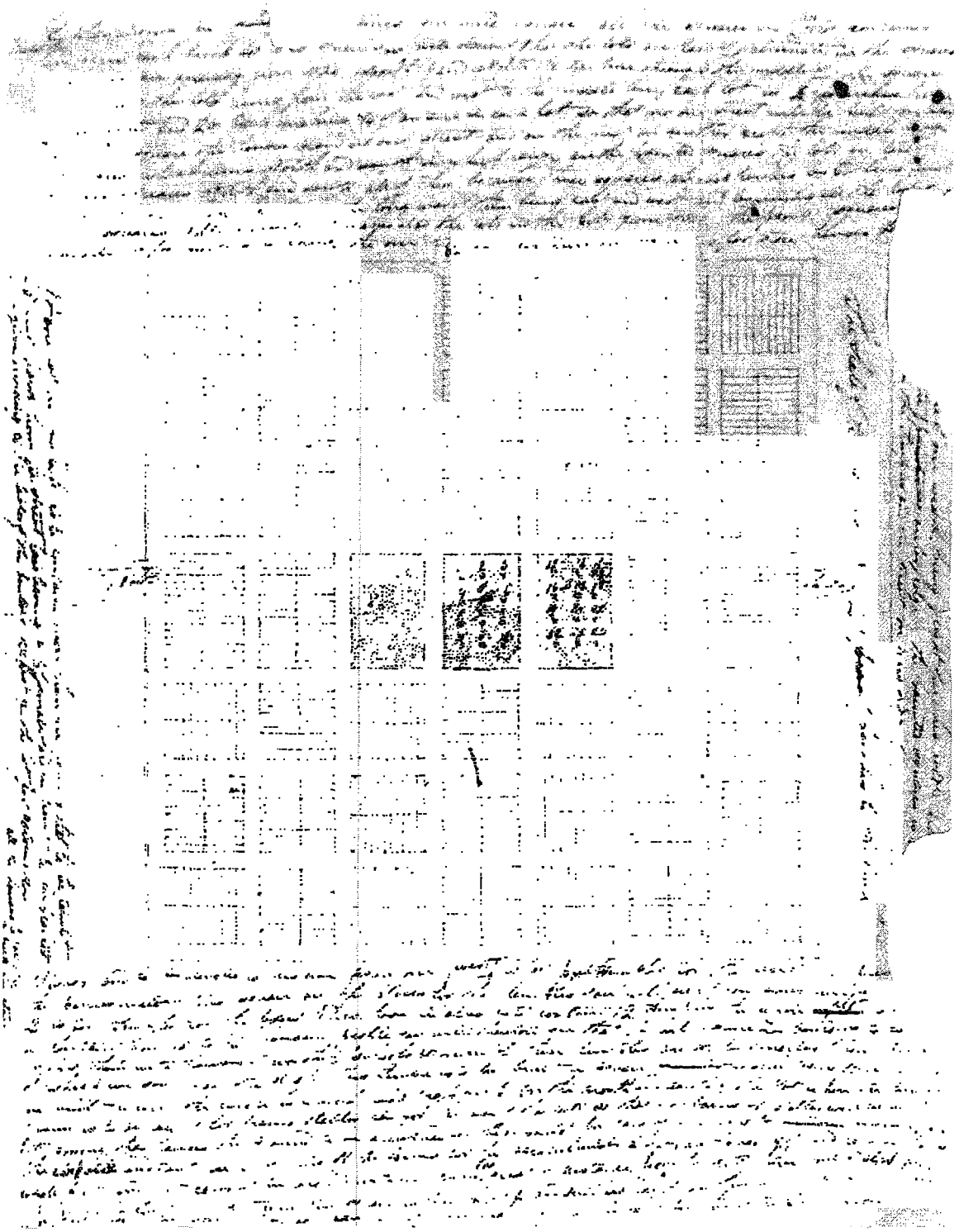

Figure 7 Plat of Zion for Independence, Missouri. This became the model for future Mormon settlements including the one at Nauvoo. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

Mormon leader Brigham Young maintained this pattern after the Saints' departure from Illinois, and it became the model for the many Mormon communities built in the West.

Both the Mormons and the Icarians viewed the village pattern of land settlement as the ideal form for a city. Nauvoo was designed to be a city composed of concentrated residences surrounded by farms, all within easy reach of transportation. The village pattern of settlement that both groups adopted had been largely abandoned by settlers on the frontier who preferred scattered homesteads. Most of Nauvoo's neighbors were independent settlers who staked their claim, built their home and outbuildings, and planted their crops. Individual rather than group settlement was the prevailing practice in Illinois.[60] However, the village pattern of land settlement had been the primary practice of New England settlers, and in building their own beacon to the world, the Mormons and Icarians consciously returned to the original "city on the hill" pattern of settlement established by the early settlers in the Massachusetts Bay.[61] Smith and Cabet designed a city composed of a relatively dense urban center with perpendicular streets and regular blocks containing houses and gardens, with farms and buildings such as stables, barns, etc. on the outskirts of town. Smith, Cabet and other utopian leaders recognized that the compact residence fostered by the village pattern of settlement encouraged and ensured social integration and unity.[62] The concentration of dwellings inside city boundaries protected and fostered a group identity as it also created an agricultural community with

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[60] Nelson, 3, 10, 26.
[61] John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," "The Religious Freedom Page," University of Virginia Library, <<http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>>, 17 June 2008.
[62] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 25; Charles L. Sellers, "Early Mormon Community Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 28 (Fall 1962): p.24-30; Nelson, 40.

the social, educational, cultural and, in the case of the Mormons, religious benefits of city life.

Round their respective centers both the Mormon and Icarian cities radiated in orderly grids. Like many other American cities at the time, Nauvoo was laid out on a grid pattern and oriented toward the cardinal directions. Jefferson's 1785 Land Ordinance established a physical grid as a social equalizer and a "blueprint for an agrarian egalitarian society," and its use was widespread in the nineteenth century.[63] The use of the grid pattern automatically incorporated Nauvoo into the rest of the nation, thus including Mormon and Icarian city building into the nation's narrative of taming and settling the land. The incorporation of the grid pattern into the plotting of the city also ensured the order and unity that would be essential to the success of utopian community.

While a simple map of the two ideal cities would look very similar, the ideology and reasoning behind the city plats are widely divergent. The Mormons, a people whose roots were largely in New England, adopted the village pattern of settlement and grids, recreating the physical environment of the first European settlers. However, they were doing much more than following tradition when they incorporated this pattern into their cities. Their prototype was not the modern American city, such as Philadelphia, Cleveland or Chicago; instead they planned their city after a divine model, the Heavenly or New Jerusalem found in the Bible: "and the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth."[64] The layout of Nauvoo, based on the earlier Plat of Zion in

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[63] John W. Reps, *Cities of The American West: A History of Frontier Urban Planning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1979), 3; Hayden, 20.

[64] The Holy Bible, King James Version. Revelation 21:16; for other Biblical references or squared cities see Numbers 35:1-5, Leviticus 25. "University of Virginia Library, http://etext.virginia.edu/kjv.browse.html>>, 27 Mar 2009.

Missouri, would allow people to live close to God's nature while enjoying the companionship of a community of Saints that was essential to the Mormon mission of temple building and to the spiritual well-being of the community. The city also allowed Mormons to reconcile two competing views of paradise that had been juxtaposed throughout America's history: Eden, an agricultural garden of individual dwellings, and the New Jerusalem, a large urban city. Furthermore, the Mormons' adoption of the grid system reflects their belief in equality in the eyes of God and was a physical representation of their attempt to make the crooked straight, to remedy the evils and ills of society in preparation for the millennium.[65] The Mormon plan is more than a map describing the physical layout of a projected city. It is a concrete enactment of theology, based on spiritual covenants and rooted in scripture. Smith and his followers believed that in creating the ideal city they were taking an important step toward creating the right kind of world that would welcome Jesus at his coming.

The Icarian predilection for the village pattern and grids is based on an entirely different ideology. It was a clear departure from the European cities they had left behind, with their irregular streets and extremes of prosperity and poverty. A city organized around a grid was fitting for installation in the American landscape, but more than that, the layout of Icaria was to be a clear illustration of the importance of order, reason and equality in the ideal society. Unlike the Mormon city, Icaria had no otherworldly purpose; the straightforward end of its existence was to remedy the social ills in providing first the necessary, then the useful, and finally the beautiful. In *Voyage* when

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[65] Donald L. Enders, "Platting the City Beautiful: A Historical and Archaeological Glimpse of Nauvoo Streets," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (Spring 1979): 409; George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo: Everyday Life in the City of Joseph* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 55; Leonard, 33; Hayden, 105; Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 70.

Carisdall first sees a map of Icaria, he cries out with pleased surprise that Icara, the capital and primary city of Icaria, is "perfectly regular." He also comments on the wide and straight streets. Cabet's system of order and regularity extended into the country where everything is organized in straight lines—fences, roads, ditches—all create an extension of the grid system from the city and extend the forces of reason and equality across the entire Icarian landscape.[66] Cabet's reason for including the urban in his utopian ideal is clear from the glowing picture of Icara, the largest and capital city. Icara is situated at the center of the land and is built on a geometrical plan, implementing the grid system with wide perpendicular streets.[67] The city in all of its order and regularity is the supreme monument to the wisdom of Icar, who planned it, and to the reason and intelligence of the people who inhabit it. The importance and primacy of reason and order, both in the layout of the city and in the lives of its residents, was the driving force behind Cabet's Icaria. In fact, Cabet states that the large cities are the most perfect realization of the "essence of the Community, because the larger and more populous a city is, the greater the place for light, warmth, for intelligence, generous sentiments, for industry, science and the arts."[68] Residents of Icaria were intimately tied to agriculture, but they lived in the city in close proximity to each other to enjoy the cultural and benefits of the community, which Cabet cast as primarily intellectual and scientific.

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[66] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 21, 157.

[67] Étienne Cabet, "Progrès de la Colonie Icarienne," in *La Colonie Icarienne: Journal d'organisation sociale* 1, no. 1 (19 Jul 1854): 2, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 11 June 2008; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 11; Robert P. Sutton, "*Voyage to Icaria*: A Message to the World," in *Humanistic Values of the Icarian* Movement, ed. Lillian M. Snyder (USA: National Icarian Heritage Society, 1980), 18-19, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University; Leonardo Benevolo, *The Origins of Town Planning*, trans. Judith Landry (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 77.

[68] Étienne Cabet, *Propagande Communiste, ou Questions à discuter et à soutenir ou à écarter* (Paris: Prevot, 1842), 9, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 11 June 2008.

Building Community

For utopian thinkers such as Joseph Smith and Étienne Cabet, planning and constructing the ideal city involved much more than platting streets and building homes. And for the inhabitants of Nauvoo, building their city was about more than creating a home for themselves. Nauvoo's successive creation and transformation illustrate Philip Wegner's assertion that space is both "a production, shaped through a variety of social processes and human interventions, and a force, that, in turn, influences, directs, and delimits the possibilities of action."[69] City building became one of the most important means through which members of each community located themselves in a meaningful, powerful world. Building the city of Nauvoo included an ongoing process of cultural work by which the city and its inhabitants acquired a sense of identity and community. In the act of creating their city and determining its nature, the Mormons and Icarians were creating and maintaining for themselves a distinct identity, shaping their own consciousness in a way that would define them and sustain them as a community even after their city was abandoned.[70]

As numerous scholars have shown, place and identity are almost indivisible. "Place creates people," wrote Belden Lane. Or as Ortega y Gasset puts it, "Tell me the landscape in which you live and I will tell you who you are."[71] Walter Benjamin declared

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[69] Wegner, 11.

[70] Klaus J. Hansen, "Mormon History and the Conundrum of Culture: America and Beyond," in *Excavating Mormon Pasts: The New Historiography of the Last Half Century*, eds. Newell G. Bringhurst and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2004), pp.1-26, p.18; Dell Upton, "What the Mormon Cultural Landscape Can Teach Us," *Journal of Mormon History* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 27.

[71] Belden C. Lane, *Landscapes of the Sacred: Geography and Narrative in American Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 20; Ortega y Gasset cited in Belden C. Lane, "Desert Indifference, Desert

that identity and location are inseparable; knowing oneself is an exercise in mapping where one stands.[72] For utopian communities, the connection between individual and group identity and a sense of belonging together are largely dependent upon the community's geography and architecture.[73] Rosabeth Moss Kanter's study of utopian communities shows that the process of community building, the laying out of streets, the construction of buildings, etc., creates a sense of common identity and fosters a commitment that contribute directly to a community's longevity and success.[74] The construction of a city requires individual investment that ties members to the community and provides tangible structures that reinforce the community's beliefs and uniqueness. It is through that investment, claims David Harvey, that communities define and empower themselves collectively.[75] One of the reasons for Mormons' long history and continued influence in Nauvoo is their profound impact on the city they created. Nauvoo remained a city defined by the Mormon imprint and was altered little by the Icarians. Cabet and his followers were more temporary tenants than active shapers of the city; in their own minds it was more of a short-term "staging ground" than an ideal and permanent settlement.[76] It wasn't until the Icarians moved to the "permanent" settlement at their built-from-scratch community in Corning, Iowa that they finally achieved a defining and sustaining

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Love," Program 3928, aired on 21 April 1996, << http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/Lane_3928.htm>>, 17 June 2008.

[72] Walter Benjamin cited in Michael Keith and Steve Pile, "Introduction Part 2: The Place of Politics" in Keith and Pile, 26.

[73] Hine, 21; Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Scribner, 1965), 78-79; Kanter, 79.

[74] Ibid., 79.

[75] Harvey, *Justice*, 323.

[76] In a letter to his right-hand man Beluze in France, Cabet called Nauvoo a "*champ de manoeuvre*" and elsewhere referred to it as a "provisory and temporary establishment" and a "preparatory station." Cabet to Beluze, 6 Aug 1849, Cabet Collection, Microfilm, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Librart, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Étienne Cabet, "Petition of the Icarians to the Members of Congress of the United States of America by Cabet," *La Colonie Icarienne* 1, no. 4 (1854).

influence of a city uniquely their own, something they were never able to achieve at Nauvoo.

Communities can begin to coalesce before their actual construction. Benedict Anderson's important work on imagined communities reveals that communities can be created and fostered over time and distance through texts, as was certainly the case with both the Mormons and the Icarians and their most important texts.[77] The Book of Mormon and *Voyage en Icarie* were the primary tools of conversion and cohesion from the inception of each movement. Both groups included adherents in both the United States and Europe, and many members' initial (and sometimes only) exposure to the respective societies was based on textual representations. The importance of these fictional or textual utopias should not be underestimated as they established and fostered such imagined communities, and in so doing contributed to both a way of imagining space and constructing communities in the real world.[78] In the case of the Mormons and Icarians, their primary texts established this imagined community, lent names to their respective movements and provided individuals with a sense of group identity.

However, adherents' relocation to the actual physical communities reinforced their commitment and bolstered their unique group identity. Like language and texts, landscape and the built environment can, as Yi-Fu Tuan asserts, "develop and refine sensibility. It can sharpen and enlarge consciousness," especially group consciousness.[79] The physical cities built by utopian communities were an important way of both

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[77] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983).
[78] Wegner, xvii, 59.
[79] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 107.

representing and reinforcing the community's unique beliefs to members and visitors alike. The city itself became a form of indoctrination or a tangible lesson in theory and practice. Actual constructed cities were important to utopians' identity and survival because they combined thought and action to create a location for embodied practice that Pierre Bourdieu terms *habitus*. This is the means through which people "negotiate the social relations and practical knowledge of their worlds."[80] In other words, Nauvoo was the space where the doctrines and theories of the Book of Mormon and *Voyage* were enacted and intimately influenced the lives of their readers. The Icarians' primary building, the refectory, showcased the importance of equality and fraternity through the physical accommodations for communal living and dining. Cabet even went so far as to have Icarian tenets painted on the walls of the refectory as a reminder to members and a lesson to visitors of the most important doctrines in Icarianism. For Mormons, the temple was the most important visual expression of their common belief in God's plan for his people and the eternal nature of the soul. Important ideology was not limited to these buildings; as we will see, the entire city—its streets, houses, and fields—emphasized unique beliefs and practices and reinforced the sense of community.

Sacred Space

Nauvoo cannot be understood completely without including the additional element of sacred space. The importance of the sacred to the Mormon mindset and community building enterprise is evident, but the city the Icarians constructed was not

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[80] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1972), 89; David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, "Introduction," in *American Sacred Space*, eds. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1995), 10.

without its sacred aspects. Sacred space is fundamental to the organization of society at both the religious and secular levels.[81] Sacred space is space that is tangibly different, an irruption of meaning and strong significance that distinguishes it from its surroundings. It essentially maps a landscape by determining a fixed point, a site that orders the world and determines a society's worldview. Geographer Neil Smith suggests that the production of sacred space also implies the production of meaning that is unique to the community and which binds the individual members together.[82] A community's grounding in space connects them to the cosmos and lends meaning to contingency and hope to defeat.

For both Mormons and Icarians the sacred nature of the city of Nauvoo was comprised of several elements. First, as Mircea Eliade asserts, the establishment of place and the fixing of a location are acts that intimate a vision of the universe and a modeling of divine creation.[83] Yi-Fu Tuan claims that building is a sacred act inasmuch as it is the "establishment of a world in the midst of primeval disorder."[84] Both communities saw their city building as establishing order in the midst of a physical wilderness on the edge of a frontier and in a world of social turmoil and decay, although for them the sources of and solutions for that decay were different. Mormons saw their city as a divine model of spiritual order in the midst of a world reeling from spiritual decay.[85] Cabet wrote that the community was the installation of order into a world of social chaos and decay, and one

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[81] Richard A. Waugh, "Sacred Space and the Persistence of Identity: The Evolution and Meaning of an American Religious Utopia," Ph.D. diss., (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995), xviii-xiv; Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1959), 20, 26.
[82] Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 77.
[83] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 63; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "Creating the Sacred Space of Zion," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2005) 8-9.
[84] Tuan, *Space and Place*, 104.
[85] For example, see The Doctrine and Covenants 133:9, 14, 17.

of the main goals of Icarian community was to "clear the wilderness" both geographical and social through the establishment of a "great society."[86]

Second, sacred space leads to a classification of persons and an understanding of one's place in the world and in the society to which one belongs. According to Eliade, sacred space establishes a center; this center distinguishes itself from the periphery and divides insiders from outsiders. For both Mormons and Icarians the formation and persistence of a community was dependent upon a common identity as members of a unique community, which in turn rested upon the construction and recognition of sacred space. Icarians were careful to construct ideological boundaries through culture, language and economics that clearly distinguished them from their non-Icarian neighbors and that were centered in their refectory. Mormon identity rested as much on a negative definition against outsiders or "gentiles" as it did upon a positive definition of Saints, a division that was most tangibly represented in the temple.[87]

According to Eliade, the sacred "*founds the world* in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world."[88] Gerardus van der Leeuw clarifies how the sacred does this in what he terms a politics of exclusion. The construction of cities and the identification of sacred space maintained and reinforced boundaries that ensured the integrity and survival of the community.[89] This "politics of exclusion" played a role in both communities. Though visitors were welcomed, the city remained apart, clearly distinct from its neighbors. Access to the most important buildings of each community—

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[86] Lillian Snyder, "Icaria in Nauvoo," Gundy Collection, Box 1, Folder 6, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[87] David Chidester and Edward T. Lenenthal, "Introduction," *American Sacred Space*, 12; Jan Shipps, "From Peoplehood to Church Membership" (paper presented at Utah State University, 24 February 2009).
[88] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 30.
[89] Quoted in David Chidester and Edward T. Lenenthal, "Introduction," *American Sacred Space*, 8.

the Mormon temple, and the Icarian refectory and schoolhouse—was carefully controlled, as we will see later. The strong sense of identification and community stemming from such definition and distinction was important to the maintenance of the ideological community which in turn depended, at least in part, upon the actual physical city each group constructed.

However, while both Mormon and Icarian Nauvoo can be considered as sacred space in a general sense, a distinction must be made between the conception of Mormon sacred space that was part of their religious worldview and the view of space held by the Icarians. Mircea Eliade asserts that the sacred is understood in distinction to the profane; they are two polarities or modes of being which order the world. The sacred is space that transcends the profane or worldly, establishes man's place in the eternities and mediates the space between God and man.[90] This dichotomization of sacred and profane is intrinsic to the religious enterprise of Mormons in Nauvoo. While the Icarians focused on establishing social and spatial order and constructing physical and ideological boundaries to define themselves against an outside, degenerate world, the Mormons were invested in building what they believed was literally the Kingdom of God. This religious mindset affected not only the Mormons' mission and way of life, but also their perception of space. For Mormons, the temple was the ultimate example of qualitatively different sacred space, and its irresistible influence infused the entire city with a sense of the sacred, which in turn distinguished the city of Nauvoo, its inhabitants and its everyday activities from those around it.

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[90] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 11, 14, 26.

The Importance of Imaginary

For Mormons their faith and religious practice formed the very fabric and foundation of Nauvoo. Mormons and their texts are steeped in spatial imagery and doctrines. Because so much of Mormon sacred text and doctrine was spatial in its orientation, it was almost inevitable that they would set about realizing these things in a space-driven way—building geographic, social and spiritual communities. Space fuses function, religion and social meaning, and for Mormons city planning and community building were directed toward both worldly and eternal ends. Nauvoo cannot be understood fully without this spiritual and religious perspective. In Nauvoo and in the Saints' lives as a whole all things physical, economic, and geographical were eventually spiritual and had eternal significance.[91] Richard Bushman argues that Mormons "were not simply westering Americans infatuated with the Prophet's promises of Utopia. Through Joseph they found God, and it was the measure of divinity in him and his teachings that held them. Nauvoo would never have risen or fallen without that spiritual life."[92]

The intimate inclusion of religion and the sacred in the space of Nauvoo was key to the Mormons' experience as success as a community both in Illinois and after their departure to the West. The mere sharing of space is not enough to define a people as a community and to provide the ideological and affective cement to hold a community together, especially in the face of opposition and change. David Harvey points out that in

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[91] The Doctrine and Covenants 29:34; Martha Sonntag Bradley, "Creating the Sacred Space of Zion," 5; W. Ray Luce, "Building the Kingdom of God: Mormon Architecture before 1847," *BYU Studies* 30, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 34.

[92] Richard L. Bushman, "The Historians and Mormon Nauvoo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 61; Leonard, xvii.

addition to shared space, a community must "find or invent an imaginary sufficient to achieve some level of social cohesion, solidarity, and institutionalized order. There are many places in the world that were arbitrarily carved out as loci of political and social power but where the imagined community to support the entity has yet to be properly forged."[93] Successful communities combined both the spatial and ideological elements into a coherent whole to create and maintain a community's identity, especially in the face of conflict and challenges.

Herein lies *the* primary difference between the communities at Nauvoo and the experiences of the people who lived there. The Icarian imaginary was a fictional construct set in imagined space that was never realized. Icaria in Nauvoo was built from expediency, with provisional constructions erected out of necessity and controlled by financial restraints. Icarians in Illinois were acutely aware of the gap between the beautiful theories and cities of *Voyage* and the difficult realities and disappointments of their everyday life in Nauvoo. Cabet himself recognized the gap and captured the frustration and disappointment when he commented at his departure from Nauvoo, ""We arrived at Nauvoo hoping to establish heaven on earth, instead we find that we have created hell."[94] The experience of the Icarians illustrates Yi-Fu Tuan's assessment of utopian space: "Yearning for an ideal and humane habitat is perhaps universal. Such a habitat must be able to support a livelihood and yet cater to our moral and aesthetic nature. When we think of an ideal place in the abstract, the temptation to oversimplify and dream is well nigh irresistible. Dire consequences ensure when that dream is set

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[93] Harvey, *Justice*, 321.
[94] Vallet, 36.

prematurely in concrete."[95] For the Icarians, theory was largely divorced from the reality of the Icaria that was constructed in Illinois, and their utopian enterprise became an exercise in frustration.

For Mormons on the other hand, their religious beliefs and texts created a profoundly important and influential imaginary anchored in space that combined with the actual community to create a unified whole that both reflected and reinforced the community's beliefs and sense of identity. The centrality of theology and doctrine not only to the Mormon mindset, but also to the very city itself, allowed them to lay hold on an ideological framework that was intimately infused into every aspect of Nauvoo. It was this intimate infusion of ideology into physical space that cemented the Mormons' identity as a community of believers and gave them a framework to understand and overcome difficulty, tragedy and defeat.

The Mormon imaginary is comprised of two primary components that involve the collapse of both space and time. The first aspect of sacred space is that of covenants and a promised land. The sacred space of Nauvoo finds its roots in Mormon scripture, especially the Book of Mormon and The Pearl of Great Price, which establishes a pattern of sacred cities and space. The Book of Mormon, although ostensibly an ancient document, was firmly rooted in a sense of sacred American space and highlights the notion of the New World as a "land of promise" that was in the symbol of a covenant which defined believers as God's chosen people.[96] The book is framed by different groups who travel to the promised land. Lehi, the first prophet of the Book of Mormon,

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[95] Yi-Fu Tuan, "Thought and Landscape: The Eye and Mind's Eye," in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D.W. Meining (New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), 101.
[96] The Book of Mormon contains over thirty direct references to the promised land, including 1 Nephi 2:20, Enos 1:10, 3 Nephi 21:22. See also Olsen, 72-73.

declares shortly after his arrival in the Americas that it is a land "which the Lord God had covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed," and that it is reserved and blessed for the righteous believers in God. He goes on to state that those who came to the land would be brought by the hand of the Lord.[97] In building their city in the heart of North America, Mormons were laying claim to the promises made by God, asserting their status as a chosen people and integrating themselves into a sacred space and history that stretched back for hundreds of years.

The notion of a promised land was closely connected to the second important element in the Mormon imaginary—the doctrine of Zion. From the beginning of the Mormon movement Zion was a doctrinal and social concept that set Mormons apart from other utopian communities and from other millenarian religions. While other groups focused on a time and an event that would prepare for the second coming, the Mormons also focused on a place. Their religion and their utopian vision were spatial as well as social and spiritual. Zion was both a concept and a location that created a sense of continuity and sacred time and that also sacralized the American landscape and the Saints' efforts to build a city of God on that landscape.

Zion was a foundational doctrine from the very inception of the church, and references to it can be found throughout Mormon scripture. For example, Solomon built his temple on Mount Zion, and The Pearl of Great Price records that the prophet Enoch built a city called Zion.[98] The Book of Mormon provided an ideological foundation for the founding of a city of Zion and offered "the ultimate cultural justification of the

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[97] The Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 2 Nephi 1:5-6.

[98] The Holy Bible, King James Version, 1 Kings 8:1; The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1981), Moses 7:18-19.

cosmic urban symbolism of Zion," but the most detailed description of the nature and theology of Zion was most clearly laid out in later revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants and in the Book of Moses.[99] The earliest reference to Zion in the revelations of Joseph Smith occurred in April 1829, preceding even the official organization of the church. The commandment to "seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" was given in the context of a revelation dealing with the translation of the Book of Mormon, establishing an immediate and intimate connection between the Mormons' most important book of scripture and one of their hallmark social and doctrinal practices.[100] By July of 1831, the prophet had identified Jackson County, Missouri as the location of the city of Zion, as "the land of promise" and a place "for the gathering of the saints."[101] In an important move connecting and collapsing both temporal and physical space, Joseph Smith identified Missouri not only as the *future* site of paradise, but also as the *former* site of paradise. He taught his followers that Jackson County, Missouri was the location of the Garden of Eden, and he later identified a valley near Independence as Adam-ondi-Ahman, a place where Adam had dwelt and where Christ would one day return.[102]

The expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri forced Joseph Smith and his followers to redefine the concept of Zion in order to provide lasting meaning to their experiences and to sanction the Mormon communities built after the abandonment of Zion. To Mormons, Zion was not only a physical location, but it also represented a state

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[99] Olsen, 66.
[100] The Doctrine and Covenants 6:6.
[101] The Doctrine and Covenants 57:1-2.
[102] Brigham Young in *Journal of Discourses*, 8:195, <<http://www.journalofdiscourses.org>>, 26 June 2007; The Doctrine and Covenants107:53-57, 116:1.

of mind or level of spiritual attainment. Zion became to the Latter-day Saints almost what a creed is to other churches and is essential to understanding Nauvoo and nineteenth-century Mormonism. Mormon scripture defined Zion as the "pure in heart," a community of the righteous where there are no poor, a refuge from worldly evil and suffering, and a City of Holiness.[103] Achieving a Zion-like society was the driving principle behind nineteenth-century Mormonism. It was the encompassing concept that governed the establishment of cities, the work of proselytizing and gathering, and the ways that individuals governed their own lives and related to the community.[104] Zion as a spiritual ideal and a social practice was at the center of Mormons' lives.

For Mormons, Zion was the ultimate example of sacred space. The Latter-day Saints who followed Joseph Smith and built cities in both Missouri and Illinois were motivated by a geographical sense of salvation. They believed that peace, prosperity and spiritual salvation would be found as they fled from the wicked world and gathered with other Saints to the city of Zion.[105] This removal and gathering was sanctioned and even commanded in scripture: "Go ye forth unto the land of Zion. . . . Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon. . . . Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight, for the hour of his coming is nigh."[106] For early Mormons, Zion was not an abstract or isolated concept; it was intimately related to the larger world, to the immanent second coming of Jesus Christ, and to their spiritual and temporal preparation before the end of the world and the

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[103] Richard Bushman, "Joseph Smith and City Planning," (paper presented at Utah State University, 21 September 2006); Hamilton, v; The Doctrine and Covenants 97:21, 45:66, 115:6; The Pearl of Great Price, Moses 7:18-19.
[104] Hamilton, 139.
[105] Leonard, 5.
[106] The Doctrine and Covenants133:9, 14, 17.

ushering in of the millennium. Building Zion and building a temple were about much more than establishing their place in the local or national topography. They were creating a sacred, center place where they could become perfected as they built a perfect world.[107] Nauvoo was an integral part of that enterprise.

The sacred narrative of Nauvoo had at its very center concepts about space—doctrines and hierarchies that were spatial and that prescribed spatial and spiritual behaviors.[108] The Mormon ideology of space and place was much larger and more pervasive than a simple siting of Zion. Joseph Smith's concepts of space and narrative extend beyond the landscape, beyond the cities and streets and buildings into the cosmos and eternity. As Martha Sonntag Bradley states, it profoundly shaped who they were as Saints and what they did:

> The religious world that the LDS Church created in the nineteenth century and continues to build in the twentieth is a spatial one. It uses space to forge identity, remember its rich and distinctive history, and to repeatedly recreate Zion. . . . In spatial religious communities, religious people build and inhabit spaces that are rich narratives of the values and beliefs they hold, that shape their decisions about family and politics, and that reveal their social relationships. Space contributed to the collective memory of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, revealed religious values and ideas, showed patterns of behavior and community, [and] carried stories about past, present and future.[109]

Mormon space helped members identify themselves as a unique and cohesive community and helped them live to together in a fellowship of faith; it created a sense of identity, distinctness and "chosenness"; it represented and reinforced members' commitment to a religious and social ideal; it carried a particular interpretation of history and destiny, and it symbolized and expressed their belief in Zion.

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[107] Bradley, "Creating the Sacred Space of Zion," 15-16.
[108] Ibid., 9.
[109] Ibid., 30

Albert Brisbane remarked that, "The spirit of a society is stamped upon its architecture."[110] A history of striving, struggles and self-definition is written in the construction and nature of the city of Nauvoo under both its utopian inhabitants. The city speaks of people devoted to their beliefs. Every street, every shop and every home tells of societies that were driven to achieve more than mere survival. Their respective cities reveal far-reaching goals of revolution and the eventual perfection of society. Yi-Fu Tuan emphasizes the grandeur of such a dream: "Landscape allows and even encourages us to dream. It does function as a point of departure. Yet it can anchor our attention because it has components that we can see and touch. As we first let our thoughts wander and then refocus them on the landscape, we learn to see not only how complex and various are the ways of human living but also how difficult it is to achieve anywhere a habitat consonant with the full potential of our being."[111] The experiences of both the Mormons and Icarians provide concrete, historical evidence of the difficulty of this achievement. Neither community fully realized their utopian ideals, and both groups were forced to abandon the city after only a few years. But the significance of such utopian enterprises lies in the tension between the real and the ideal, and the striving for rather than the achievement of perfection. It is the attempt, not the result, which defines the human enterprise and makes the utopian impulse necessary and eternal.

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[110] Albert Brisbane, *A Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association, or Plan for the Re-organization of Society*, Internet Archive, << http://www.archive.org/details/aconciseexposit00brisgoog>> 26 June 2007.
[111] Tuan, "Thought and Landscape," 101.

CHAPTER THREE

CENTERS

In April 1849 when the Icarians arrived in Nauvoo, the Nauvoo temple was an empty shell; four blackened walls were all that remained after an arsonist's fire gutted the building. Erected at a cost of nearly one million dollars, the temple stood complete for a mere thirty months before it burned on 9 October 1848.[1] In spite of its short lifespan, the temple was the centerpiece of Nauvoo from the moment of its construction until well after its destruction. Jean-Claude Cretinon, a journeyman printer turned Icarian, arrived in Nauvoo in 1855, after the temple had been reduced to a single standing wall. He left the following impression of Nauvoo:

> Many cities more important than Nauvoo are not visited as often by travelers, for the sojourn of the Mormons, and, after them, the Icarians, made this little place well known. It is rare to see a steamboat stop for several hours at Montrose [Iowa] on the other side of the river, without travelers coming to pay a visit. . . . They stop at the temple, admiring what is left, play several pieces of religious or patriotic music, then erupt into the refectory, which they visit with a surprising lack of consideration.[2]

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[1] "Nauvoo-The City of Joseph," *Church Almanac 2001-2002* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 2002), 124; "The Mormons," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 6, no. 35 (April 1853): 612, Library of Congress, "The Nineteenth Century in Print: Periodicals Library, American Memory," <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/moahtml/snchome.html>> 10 July 2007; *The Scenery of the United States, Illustrated in a Series of Forty Engravings* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1855), 133; Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: John B. Alden, 1890), 383; Benson Whittle, "The Sunstones of Nauvoo: An Interpretive Account of the Temple Capitals" *Sunstone*, no. 123 (July 2002): 19; Thomas Rees, "Nauvoo, Illinois, Under Mormon and Icarian Occupants," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 21, no. 4 (January 1929): 511.

[2] Rude, 146.

The Nauvoo temple was the great common denominator between the two communities at Nauvoo. The Icarians settled at Nauvoo with plans to reconstruct the temple and turn it into a grand building housing their refectory, schools, workshops, communal housing and offices.[3] Cabet envisioned that the building would still serve as the center and focal point of the community, but under a completely different form. However, fate seemed to conspire against the Icarians' grand plans for the temple ruins. On 27 May 1850, one year after the Icarians' arrival in Nauvoo, a tornado further damaged the partially destroyed temple, and the Icarians were forced to dismantle it, using the carefully crafted temple stones in various buildings throughout the community.[4]

Nauvoo was and still is defined by the temple that stood at its center. Both the Mormons and the Icarians, and indeed all communities are defined by their center, whether this center is a geographical location or an ideological focus. As Martin Buber explains, "The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation to the center overriding all other relations: the circle is described by the radii, not by the points along its circumference."[5] Henri Lefebvre asserts that representational space has a strong "affective kernel or center" that "embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations." According to this notion of space, the center projects a certain understanding, a set of meanings upon which members of the community agree. It also provides an essential framework for experience through which members of the

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[3] Étienne Cabet, "Lettre de M. Cabet, dans le *Missouri Republican* 18 April 1849," in *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 2* (Paris: Malteste, 1849), Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 10 March 2008.

[4] Felix Bonnaud, *Cabet et son oeuvre, appel à tous les socialistes* (Paris: Société libre d'édition des gens de Lettres, 1900), 108.

[5] Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 135.

community learn who they are in relation to their community and to larger society.[6] Spatial centers most often represent and express ideological focal points, or doctrinal centers unique to a community around which members cohere. American sociologist Edward Shils claims that a center refers to a community's central values, its important institutional arrangements, and the key members who espouse the community's values and occupy its main institutional roles. The more individual members of the community are attached to the center, the stronger that particular society.[7]

In Nauvoo each group's approach to centers highlights their differences and reveals their unique perception of what constitutes a perfect society. In the temple the Mormons created a powerful and prominent architectural center that set them apart from the outside world and that united the disparate threads of their communal experience into a single, strongly unifying entity. The Mormons' establishment of a strong center ensured the creation of a strong community, and it was the temple that reinforced their common bonds and carried them, as a cohesive group, into the west and eventually throughout the world. The Icarians, on the other hand, never created a corresponding center; rather they constructed a fragmented and unfocused city that led to confusion and conflict, and their years in Nauvoo were ones of fluctuation and decline. With their purchase of the temple, the Icarians aimed at the creation of a strong affective center, but they were unable to achieve such unity architecturally or ideologically. The successful and inclusive integration of ideology and space that Mormons found through their complete

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[6] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 42; David Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Social Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 214

[7] Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

concentration on the temple was not matched by the Icarians, who dismantled the imposing monument and distributed their energies and ideals into disparate buildings throughout the community, creating competing centers that eventually compromised the foundation of the community and the integrity of the Icarian vision. Like the Mormons, the Icarians left Nauvoo after about seven years, but without an ideological and affective center, they became a loosely coalescing group that dwindled into obscurity.

"The House of the Lord"

The temple first served to locate Mormons in space. Traditionally, a temple is the ultimate expression of sacred space and a physical representation of God's presence.[8] Jacob Neusner, scholar of Judaism, claims that in ancient tradition the temple was the center of creation and the world.[9] Mircea Eliade clarifies how the temple and the symbolism of the center function: Temples are replicas of the sacred mountain, the place where heaven and earth meet, and as such are located at the center of the world.[10] As a link between heaven and earth, temples are the definitive center, ordering the universe and defining man's existence in it. The temple is a symbolic map of the heavens, a scale model of the universe, and "the hierocentric point" around which all things are organized. As an analogue of the cosmos, or a scale model of the universe oriented to the cardinal directions, the temple is a divine center where a people connect with the holy, establish a place and a relationship in regard to the cosmos and come to understand the meaning of

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[8] Hamilton, 33.
[9] Quoted in Lee Groberg, *Sacred Stone: Temple on the Mississippi*, 2002. Film.
[10] Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 12; Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 39.

existence.[11] As a sacred model of the universe, the temple both represents and contains the world, transcending the profane and establishing communication with the world of gods. The sacred space of temples is set apart from the profane by rites that mediate the space between God and man and aid in "taking our bearings on the universe and in the eternities both in time and in space."[12] The temple at once anchors and sacralizes a place by creating a sacred center and an upward opening that sets it apart from other structures and other spaces.

The nature of a temple as an embodied, physical construction modeling the cosmos reveals the importance and power of architecture to mediate the space between God and man.[13] The sacred space of the temple is defined and set apart from the profane through its celestial architecture, represented visually in the Nauvoo Temple through the inclusion of celestial bodies—the sun, the moon and the stars—as important architectural motifs. The unique carvings on the temple reminded viewers that the temple was an earthly reproduction of a transcendent model and the copy of a celestial work of architecture.[14] The purposes and practices of the temple—establishing a relationship with God, teaching about the order of the universe and the plan of God for man's salvation—were visibly and clearly written in the very physical structure of the temple, inside and out.

In making the temple the center of his city, Joseph Smith consciously appropriated the sacred tradition of temples that stretched back into Old Testament times

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[11] John M. Lundquist, *The Temple: Meeting Place of Heaven and Earth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 12; Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 15, 19.
[12] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 26; Nibley, 15.
[13] Bradley, "Creating the Sacred Space of Zion," 26.
[14] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 58.

and located Mormonism squarely within this tradition. God himself, as understood through Smith's reading of the Bible and direct revelation, dictated the dimensions, materials and uses of both the ancient temple and the modern Nauvoo temple. Within the sacred precincts of both the Biblical and Nauvoo temples, men performed sacred rituals, communicated with God and witnessed his glory.[15] The authority that allowed men to officiate in sacred ordinances in both instances was the same, as Joseph Smith's claim to a "restoration" included the direct restoration of the priesthood, or divine authority to act in the name of God.[16] The revelation given to Joseph Smith in 1841 that commanded the construction of the temple in Nauvoo directly equated the modern structure with the tabernacle carried by Moses and the children of Israel during their journey in the wilderness and with the temple that was later built in the land of promise.[17] In one of his earliest mentions of the temple to be constructed in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith made the connection explicit when he declared in 1840 that, "I obligate myself to build as great a temple as ever Solomon did."[18] So clear was this connection to the ancient temple that even non-Mormons mentioned it. Charlotte Haven, a non-Mormon resident of Nauvoo, wrote in a January 1843 letter a description of the "celebrated Mormon temple," and commented that, "The Mormons look upon this undertaking as equal to the building of Solomon's temple."[19]

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[15] The Holy Bible, King James Version, Exodus 25-27, 1 Kings 6-8; The Doctrine and Covenants 95:14-15, 124:26-27.

[16] For more on priesthood authority and the restoration of the priesthood within Mormonism see Mario S. De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no.1 (Spring 1966): 68-88; also *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 55-56.

[17] The Doctrine and Covenants 124:38.

[18] Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, eds. *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Orem, UT: Grandin Press, 1994), 418.

[19] Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," *Overland Monthly* 16, no. 96 (December 1890): 620.

In making the temple the focal point of both Mormon doctrine and Mormon cities, Smith not only connected himself to an ancient sacred tradition, but he adopted an apparatus for building and maintaining a coherent, sacred community. Both the ancient temples of the Bible and the temple at Nauvoo defined a people as chosen by God and sacralized the cities that contained them, clearly setting them apart from other people and places. The tabernacle of Moses, as a portable temple, served to define and unite a people who had been scattered in slavery and who were emerging as a sacred nation and a holy people. In building a temple at Nauvoo, the Saints connected themselves directly with these powerful biblical antecedents and became the self-proclaimed heirs of Israel and the Abrahamic covenant. In making temples the focal point of his communities, Smith defined his followers as "Latter-day Saints," locating them in sacred history and defining them as the spiritual heirs of God's ancient chosen people.

For the Mormons, the concept of Zion was central to their notion of sacred history and their identity as God's chosen people, and the temple was central to this doctrine. A revelation contained in the Doctrine and Covenants declared the temple to be "the foundation of Zion," and indeed, a temple was placed at the center of Mormon cities including with Kirtland, Ohio; Independence and Far West, Missouri; Nauvoo, Illinois; as well as in important Mormon settlements in the West.[20] The temple was the ultimate and all-encompassing expression of the sacred in the lives of the Saints, and its presence at the center of their cities allowed them to endow these same cities with eternal and spiritual significance. It also helped them to maintain the motivation and unifying force of the concept of Zion. In earlier revelations Joseph Smith identified Zion as being

[20] The Doctrine and Covenants 124:39.

located at Independence, Missouri. But the Mormons' forced expulsion from Independence in 1833 compromised the notion of Zion as a fixed geographic location and suggested the Saints' failure to accomplish the divine mandate of building a holy city. The ensuing notion of the temple as the foundation of Zion allowed for a continuation of this mission. With the construction of a temple, Nauvoo became "a cornerstone of Zion."[21] Temple building allowed the Saints to reaffirm their faith in the Prophet Joseph Smith and to expand their notion of Zion to include "all of North and South America," rather than the narrowly defined location in Missouri which they had lost.[22] The continuing concept of sacred cities that characterized the early Mormon movement was thus largely dependent upon the sacralizing influence of temples built in Nauvoo and other cities.

The temple was built at the expense of great suffering and sacrifice, but more than any other aspect of Mormons' belief, the temple gave meaning to their suffering and provided an extended, even eternal perspective that helped believers cope with the vicissitudes and transcend the trials of life in Nauvoo. Life in Nauvoo was not one of ease. Joseph Smith admitted that theirs was a city of poverty; sickness and death were rampant, especially in the early years, and the city proved to be only a short-lived respite between excruciating expulsions.[23] Members repeatedly emphasized their belief in the temple, its purposes and its importance in their immediate and eternal lives. James Jones, a convert from England wrote to a friend of the completion of the temple: "Once more, you have heard that there was to be a Temple built. . . . In the midst of mobs and

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[21] The Doctrine and Covenants 124:2.
[22] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:318.
[23] Prophet's Letter to John C. Bennett, 8 August 1840 in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:178-179.

persecution that house is built. The Lord has accepted the same at our hands. It is consecrated and in that house I myself with thousands more have received our washings, anointings, and endowments. . . . Now this one thing is worth all and more than all the sorrows and afflictions I have had to pass through."[24] The temple continued to sustain the Mormons and maintained their community of faith as they left Nauvoo and the temple for an unknown home in the West. Sara Dearmon Pea Rich spoke for many other Saints when she wrote,

> Many were the blessings we had received in the House of the Lord which has caused us joy and comfort in the midst of our sorrows, and enabled us to have faith in God, knowing He would guide us and sustain us in the unknown journey that lay before us. For if it had not been for the faith and knowledge that was bestowed upon us in that Temple by the influence and help of the spirit of the Lord, our journey would have been like one taking a leap in the dark, to start out on such a journey in the winter as it were, in our state of poverty, it would seem like walking into the jaws of death. But we had faith in our Heavenly Father and put our trust in him feeling that we were his chosen people and had embraced his gospel and instead of sorrow we felt to rejoice.[25]

Brigham Young capitalized on the tremendous sustaining potential of the temple and the sense of continuity it provided in a time of confusion, conflict, and persecution. After the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in the summer of 1844, Young, as the new prophet-president of the church, placed even greater emphasis on the completion of the temple, in spite of increasing opposition and the growing certainty of the Mormons' eventual expulsion. Even more than the construction of the temple, the doctrines and ordinances associated with it promoted group loyalty and a collective approach to solving problems. The Nauvoo temple was the repository of the fundamental elements of Mormon consciousness that defined them as a people and set them apart from the rest of the world.

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[24] Quoted in Leonard, 568.
[25] Quoted in Don F. Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple: A Story of Faith* (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2002), 108.

The Saints' identity as a distinct, religious community was centered on the temple, its doctrines and practices.[26]

Faithful believers entered the temple to participate in sacred, binding ordinances. The Mormon concept of ordinances includes all of God's decrees, laws, commandments, statues and judgments. But more specifically, they are rites and ceremonies believed to be essential to salvation by which an individual makes covenants, or sacred promises, to God.[27] The highest and most sacred of these ordinances can only be performed only within the confines of temples. As the walls of the towering structure slowly rose, they were a tangible reminder to the Saints of their sacrifice and promised blessings; they also reinforced the members' sense of participation and belonging in something that transcended time and space.

In addition to its central location spatially, the temple constituted the ideological center of the community in three important ways. First, as *the* public works project and the most important economic undertaking in Nauvoo, the temple was the center of the community's social and communal activity. This single building literally dictated the political, economic and social activity in the city. Second, the temple was the center and capstone of Mormon doctrine and religious practice. The temple became the point of convergence for unique Mormon beliefs about the Fall, the nature of man, the atonement of Jesus Christ, and life after death, to name only a few. It sharply focused Mormon

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[26] Olsen, 226; Leonard, 236-7, 624; Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 108; R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986), 37; Heidi S. Swinton, *Sacred Stone: The Temple at Nauvoo* (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2002), 4; Marvin S. Hill, "Religion in Nauvoo: Some Reflections" in Launius and Hallwas, *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, 124.

[27] Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 548-549. Temple theology and ordinances were not fully introduced until the end of Joseph Smith's life during the construction of the Nauvoo Temple. The Kirtland temple served principally as a meetinghouse. The Nauvoo temple and all subsequent temples have been focused on the performance of sacred ordinances.

religious activities, beliefs, and their notions of sacred space. Finally, the temple was at the center of the Mormons' self-conception as a community and a chosen people. The temple was the repository and physical representation of the fundamental elements of Mormon consciousness, including their notions of time, space, identity and destiny.[28] It united and defined the Saints in distinction to those around them. The Nauvoo temple was thus the most important building in Nauvoo, and an understanding of the city and its inhabitants rests upon an understanding of the structure that drove and defined the city and its Saints. To miss the meaning of the temple is to miss the meaning of Mormonism and the meaning of Nauvoo, the "temple city" of Mormonism.[29]

For the Saints under Joseph Smith, building the temple was an enormous task requiring the labor, resources and cooperation of an entire population. The building itself was monumental, "the largest structure in any of the Western states" and "the finest edifice west of Philadelphia."[30] As the most extensive and expensive public works project, the temple dictated the use of economic and public resources of Nauvoo. The temple was a massive building, dwarfing the other buildings in Nauvoo and along the Mississippi River. It was eighty-eight feet wide and 128 feet long and rose to a height of over 150 feet. Its importance was emphasized by the quality of materials used in its

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[28] Olsen, 226.

[29] Robert Bruce Flanders, "Dream and Nightmare: Nauvoo Revisited," in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History*, eds. F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973), pp.141-165, pp.158-159.

[30] *New York Spectator* (9 Nov 1844) quoted in E. Cecil McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1962), 51; Rev. Henry Caswall, M.A., "The City of the Mormons, or Three Days at Nauvoo in 1842" (London: J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1843), 16, Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

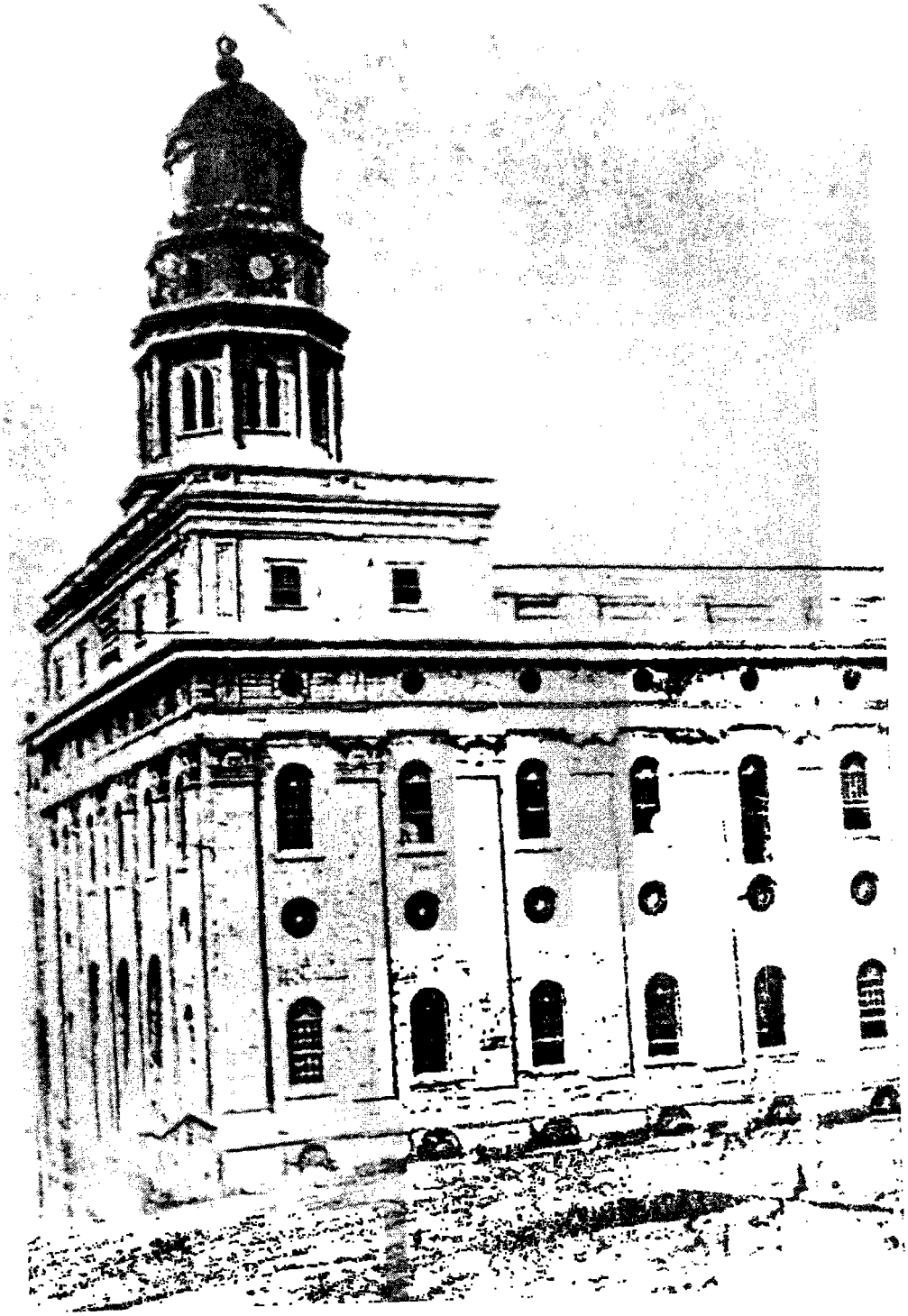

Figure 8 Daguerreotype of the Nauvoo Temple, 1848. Louis Rice Chaffin.
Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

construction—pine beams cut and shipped downriver from Mormon pineries in Wisconsin and hand-hewn limestone quarried near Nauvoo. The massive stone walls gave the building a monumental solidity and visual prominence unusual on the American frontier, and it necessitated a large population of able-bodied believers willing to devote their time and labor to the project.[31] The demands of the temple produced a "concentration of action" and "unity of effort" that defined and advanced the Saints' interests, both temporal and spiritual.[32] Church leaders called for members across the United States and Great Britain to gather to Nauvoo to participate in building the unique structure. The gathering central to Mormonism was thus not only a way of separating believers from a depraved world to create an isolated utopian community, but it was also an important means of gathering essential resources together to build temples where members could participate in sacred rites which bound people together as individuals and families and which also bound them to God.[33]

The construction of such a building was a remarkable financial undertaking. The tremendous burden the construction of a temple placed on a nearly impoverished people still recovering from overwhelming losses in Missouri required a degree of cooperation and unity that reaffirmed the already existing bonds of common faith and created a coherent community. In connection with the call to gather, Joseph Smith called upon the

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[31] Chad M. Orton and William W. Slaughter, *Joseph Smith's America, His Life and Times* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 198; W. Aitken, of Ashton-Under-Lyne, "A Journey up the Mississippi River, from its Mouth to Nauvoo, the City of the Latter Day Saints" (Ashton-Under-Lyne, England: John Williamson, 1845), 35, Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah; *The Times and Seasons*, 9 January 1841; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:229; Laurel B. Andrew, *The Early Temples of the Mormons: The Architecture of the Millennial Kingdom in the American West* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), 57.

[32] "A Proclamation of the First Presidency of the Church to the Saints Scattered Abroad" (January 1841) in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:271-272.

[33] Olsen, 230. See also Letter from Francis Moon, 4 November 1840 in the *Millennial Star* (February 1841), microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Saints to donate "a tenth of all [they possess] to the temple project."[34] Most eagerly donated their tenth and more. Brigham Young wrote to apostle Lyman Wight that, "with but a few exceptions the Saints are willing to give their all for the Temple if required."[35] Some of the more sizeable donations amounted to thousands of dollars. Ebenezer Robinson, editor of the Nauvoo newspaper, sold it in 1842 for six thousand dollars; he promptly gave $4,561.91 as a donation for the temple.[36] Joseph Toronto, a recent convert from Sicily, donated his entire life savings of $2500 in gold because he "wanted to give himself and all he had to build the kingdom of God."[37] Most Saints made smaller contributions. Women sold or donated belongings such as china, jewelry, watches, quilts, rugs and furniture to contribute to the temple effort.[38] Members in and around Nauvoo also donated a tithe of their time, or one day in ten, to the temple's construction as determined in the October 1840 General Conference of the Church. Men worked

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[34] *Diaries of William Huntington*. Typescript, 13, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[35] Quoted in McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 73.

[36] Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 251; Phillip B. Winkler, *Mormon Nauvoo in Jacksonian America*, Ph.D. diss. (Middle Tennessee State University, 1991), 136-137.

[37] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:433.

[38] Louisa Adeline Noble Badger, "A sketch of the life of Susan Hammond Ashby Noble [her mother], 1924, Manuscript, 6; *Women's Exponent* 37 (March 1909): 41-42, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah; Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 241; *Times and Seasons*,1 August 1844. An excerpt from surviving ledger records for contributions to Temple and Nauvoo House gives an idea of the variety of contributions to the temple committee:

Elijah Fordham - 3 ½ lbs. of beef, 1 lb of butter . . . $ .20
Joseph W. Johnson - 5 lbs. of flour 10
Mrs. Marm - 2 days work washing @ .37 ½ 75
Orson Spencer - 40 lbs. of pork 2.00
Edward Hunter - 2 chickens @ .12 ½ 25
Mrs. Stead - 1 days work washing . . . . . .37 ½ in McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 43.

quarrying rock or finishing timber. Women sewed and washed clothes for the temple workers and prepared their meals.[39]

Such contributions were not mere economic arrangements. For the Saints, building the temple was an act of worship in which their feelings and faith were deeply engaged. The spiritual nature of such an undertaking was emblazoned across the western entrance of the building. Above the three arched entryways was a rectangular entablature bearing the inscription:

> The House of the Lord
> Built by
> The Church of Jesus Christ of
> Latter-day Saints
> Commenced April 6, 1841
> Holiness to the Lord.[40]

The construction of such an edifice was a tremendous financial undertaking, but the Saints in Nauvoo believed that it was also a spiritual commandment from God with antecedents reaching back into sacred history. The law of tithing used to finance the building was outlined in the Doctrine and Covenants as a revelation to Joseph Smith and had its roots in the Old Testament.[41] As the Lord's economic law designed for the construction of the temple, the law of tithing was also a test of faithfulness, dividing believers from unbelievers. The Prophet promised material and eternal rewards to those who paid their tithes in material and labor: "I intend to keep the door at the dedication myself and not a man shall pass who has not paid his bonus [tithing]."[42] The spiritual

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[39] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:205, 229; Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 201; *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 242-243.
[40] Charles Lanman, *A Summer in the Wilderness embracing a canoe voyage up the Mississippi and around Lake Superior* (New York: Appleton, 1847), 31, microfilm, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah; "The Mormons," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 615.
[41] The Doctrine and Covenants, Section 119; The Holy Bible, King James Version, Malachi 3:8-18.
[42] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:243.

blessings of the temple were dependent upon an individual's faithfulness in contributing to its construction. The temple committee kept careful records of tithing donations, and members could not participate in temple ordinances such as baptisms for the dead, unless they produced a certificate from the general church recorder stating that they had paid their tithing.[43] Those who paid their tithing and were admitted within the sacred walls of the temple received blessing for themselves and for their deceased ancestors. Joseph Smith taught that certain ordinances were essential to every person's individual salvation, and that they could only be performed within the walls of a temple.[44] For most Mormons this was more than adequate incentive to contribute to the temple.

The construction of the temple also had an important impact on the city itself. The temple jump-started the Nauvoo economy and directed the flow of goods and people in and out of Nauvoo and along the Mississippi River. While other public works projects were proceeding at the same time as the temple and serving to shape the city, the sacred structure on the hill took precedence and was the major focus of the Saints' efforts and energy.[45] In March 1844, just a few months before his death, Joseph Smith declared that, all other construction projects would "stand until the temple is done, and we will put all our forces on the Temple, turn our lumber towards the Temple."[46] The temple became the major mobilizing force for the Nauvoo economy and the primary public works project in

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[43] Erastus Snow in *Journal of Discourses* 19:337; M. Guy Bishop, "'What Has Become of our Fathers?' Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 93.
[44] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:426. Some ordinances including baptisms for the dead and endowments were performed outside the temple before its completion, but Joseph Smith taught that this was a temporary measure. See The Doctrine and Covenants 124:29-30; see also Alexander L. Baugh, "'For This Ordinance Belongeth to My House' The Practice of Baptism for the Dead Outside the Nauvoo Temple," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 47-58.
[45] Other public works projects included the Masonic Hall, the Seventies' Hall, a Concert Hall and the Arsenal.
[46] Minutes of a Council Meeting–Twelve and Temple Committee, 4 March 1844, Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:230.

the city. Mormon member Anne Hughlings Pitchforth wrote that two hundred men were employed daily on the temple.[47] While most workers were not paid for their labor on the temple, members donated supplies and food to support the laborers during their work on the temple.

So important was the temple that the city of Nauvoo itself was constructed according to its relation to temple building. Joseph Smith and the city council divided the city into wards, which functioned not only as civic and political units as in other American cities, but as religious and ecclesiastical units. The wards were the civil divisions through which police, taxes, elections,schools, and other municipal needs were organized. But they were also ecclesiastical units led by a bishop who cared for the physical and spiritual needs of the members. One of the most important reasons for the creation of wards was to facilitate the construction of the temple. Each ward was assigned a day to labor on the temple to meet the required labor tithe. The Nauvoo City Council created the first wards in March of 1841 with lines intersecting at the northwest corner of the temple block. The construction of the temple thus literally changed the map of Nauvoo and became the focal

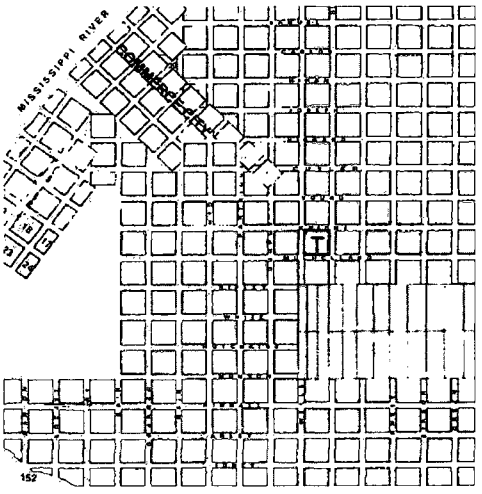

Figure 9 Nauvoo Wards, 1841

[47] Anne Hughlings Pitchforth, Letter to her Parents, May 1845, quoted in Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 152.

point of the city, determining both religious and political boundaries throughout the city.[48]

Once temple construction began, the focal point of the city literally shifted from the flats to the temple site on the bluff overlooking the river. People chose to locate near the temple for spiritual, social and economic reasons. As newcomers came to Nauvoo, many chose to settle near the temple, and many older residents moved to the temple hill as they established better and more permanent residences. This was partly out of a desire to be closer to the spiritual center of the city and to be able to keep an eye on the building's progress, but proximity to the temple also was indicative of economic and social power. Hundreds of men were employed in constructing the temple, and moving to the bluff meant they could be closer to work. A commercial district also developed adjoining the temple to support the increased activity in that part of the city.[49]

In spite of the variety of activities that occurred in and around the temple, its primary purpose was religious. In a discourse delivered at the Nauvoo temple site on 11 June 1843, Joseph Smith explained the importance of temples:

> In any age of the world . . . the main object was to build unto the Lord an house [sic] whereby he could reveal unto his people the ordinances of his house and glories of his kingdom and teach the people the ways of salvation. For there are certain ordinances and principles that when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. This was purposed in the mind of God before the world was; . . . it is for this same purpose that God gathers together the people in the last

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[48] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:305-306; William G. Hartley, "Nauvoo Stake, Priesthood Quorums, and the Church's First Wards," *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992): 58; Flanders, "Dream and Nightmare: Nauvoo Revisited," 157.

[49] For example, see the journal of Zina Diantha Huntington Young in Madsen, *In their Own Words*. Charlotte Haven reported that brother's family was moving from "our little cottage" to "our new brick house, a block beyond the Temple. Business is coming up that way." Quoted in William Mulder, "Nauvoo Observed," *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992): 110.

> days to build unto the Lord an house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments.[50]

All religious practices, doctrines and organizations eventually pointed to the temple. The sermons Joseph Smith taught in the city were largely directed to preparing the Saints for the ordinances and doctrines to be revealed in the temple. The women's Relief Society was organized partly to prepare the sister Saints for temple ordinances. Mormon missionary efforts, priesthood quorums and religious services were all oriented to the temple.[51]

The temple itself was a visual testament of unique Mormon doctrines. The most unique and eloquent element of the temple were the cosmological symbols carved around the building. The *New York Spectator* gives the most detailed contemporary description of the building's exterior ornaments: "Nothing can be more original in architecture – each of its huge pilasters rests upon a block of stone, bearing in relief on its face the profile of a new moon, represented with a nose, eye and mouth, as sometimes seen in almanacs. On the top, not far from fifty feet high, is [a] representation of the rising sun, which is a monstrous prominent stone face, the features of which are colossal and singularly expressive. Still higher are two enormously large hands grasping two trumpets, crossed. These all stand out on the stone boldly."[52] Above the pilasters a double cornice around

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[50] Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 10 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 2:240; Larry C. Porter and Milton V. Backman, "Doctrine and the Temple in Nauvoo," *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992): 45.

[51] Robert M. Lillibridge, "Architectural Currents on the Mississippi River Frontier: Nauvoo, Illinois," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 19, no. 3 (October 1960): 114.

[52] *New York Spectator* (9 November 1844) in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds. *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, 1994), 159; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "Helen Mar Whitney Reminiscences (Part Four)." *Nauvoo Journal* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 32; *The Nauvoo Neighbor* 12 June 1844. Each pillar was hand carved and said to have cost $3000 for a total cost of $90,000 for the pillars alone. Quincy, *Figures of the Past*, 328; Ivan J. Barrett,

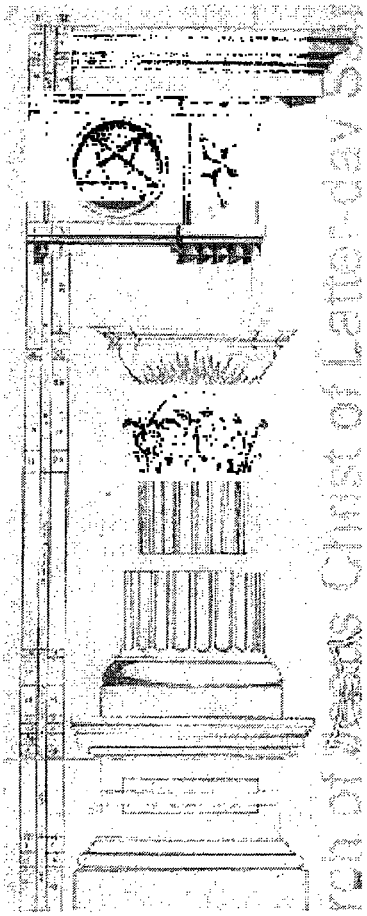

Figure 10 William Weeks's Architectural Sketch of a Nauvoo Temple Column. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

the eave was decorated by a wide, heavily molded frieze ornamented with circles and stars and was topped a balustrade immediately below the low-pitched roof.[53]

The sun, moon and star ornaments on the temple exterior that were the focus of so much comment functioned as symbols with several meanings. These heavenly symbols suggested the presence of God and were a reminder that the temple was, at least in the Mormon mindset, literally the House of the Lord.[54] Mormon scholar Hugh Nibley suggests that the sun, moon and star stones reinforced the ancient belief that the temple was a scale model of the universe. They were arranged in the order they would be seen from the earth looking up into heaven, thus serving to orient the individual believer and establish his place in the cosmos.[55] These symbols also had meanings unique to Latter-day Saint doctrine and belief. The sun, moon and stars were evocative of a hallmark Mormon doctrine of "three degrees of glory." Rather than the traditional Christian concept of heaven and hell, Joseph Smith taught that heaven consists of three divisions, or kingdoms, known, in order from highest to lowest, as the celestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the telestial kingdom,

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Joseph Smith and the Restoration: A History of the Church to 1846 (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1973), 566-567.

[53] Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 195.

[54] Swinton, 73; Maxine Hanks, "The Nauvoo Temple: A Symbol of Wholeness, "*Sunstone*, no. 123 (July 2002): 26.

[55] Nibley, 196; Brown and Smith, 92.

represented by the sun, moon, and stars, respectively.[56] For the Mormon inhabitants of Nauvoo the temple was thus a clear representation of heaven in their midst. The association with the revelation on the degrees of glory is probably the most common one for Mormons today, but the symbols on the temple are presented in a different order than

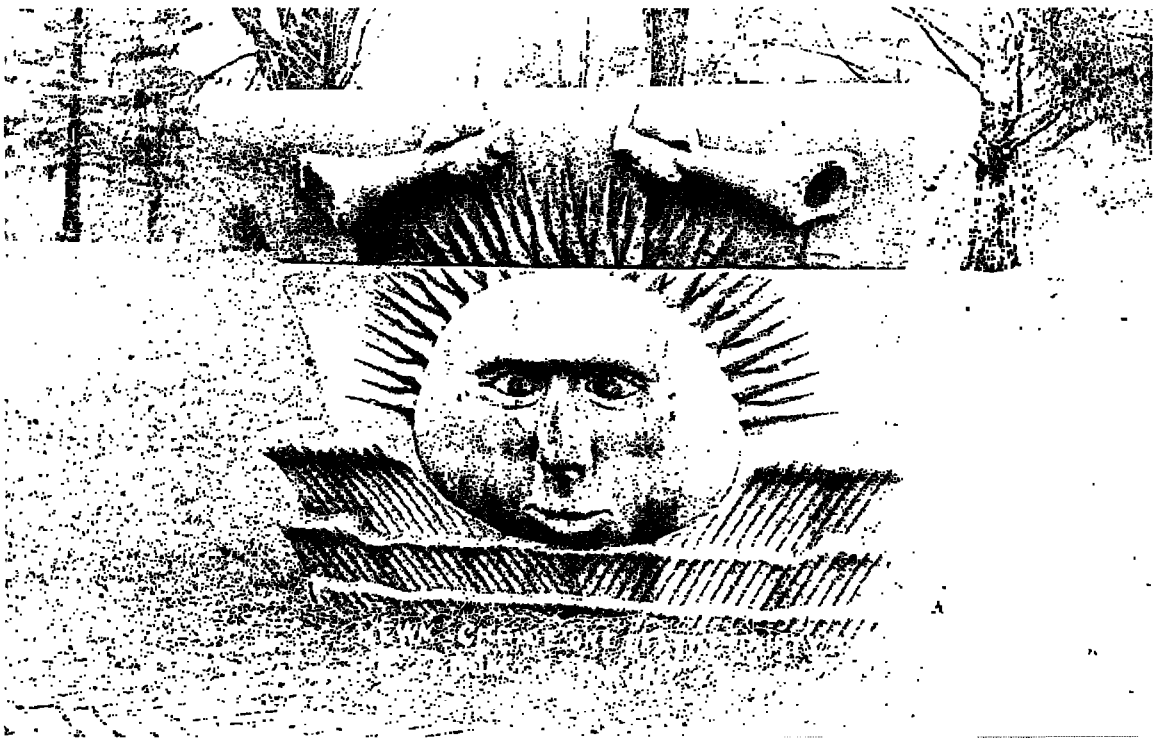

Figure 11 Original Sunstone from the Nauvoo Temple. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

found in the revelation on the degrees of glory. The order of the symbols (from bottom to top)–moon, sun, and stars—validates the interpretation of William Weeks, the temple architect, who recorded that, "The architecture of the temple was purely original and unlike anything in existence, being a representation of the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife–John the revelator says in Rev 12:10 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven;

[56] For more information on the doctrine of the three degrees of glory see The Doctrine and Covenants, Section 76.

a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' This is portrayed in the beautiful cut stone of this grand temple."[57] This allegorical representation of the Church as the Bride of Christ illustrated the Saints' belief in the second coming of Christ, when Christ as the Bridegroom would be united with his bride, the Church. Joseph Smith taught that heavenly bodies provided signs of the Lord's second coming and were thus a reminder of the Saints' place in the last days and the importance of preparing for Christ's return.[58] It was precisely this millennial hope for which they were preparing by constructing a holy city crowned with a temple.

The architecture of the temple and the inclusion of complex cosmological symbols evidenced the existence of a community that was very different from its neighbors in religious, social and cultural practices.[59] While Mormons were familiar with the coded language embedded in the symbols on the temple, visitors to Nauvoo did not know what to make of this "singular and unique" structure, whose architectural ornamentation was "semi-solemn, semi-laughable."[60] People such as John Greenleaf Whittier commented that the building would become "the most splendid and imposing architectural monument in the new world," observing that the architecture was "singular and mysterious."[61] Non-Mormons understood that temple building was "one of the chief purposes of Mormonism," but they were generally at a loss to explain the strange structure towering over the town.[62] For those initiated into Mormonism, the temple's

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[57] Wandle Mace, Autobiography, 120, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Brown and Smith, 92.
[58] The Doctrine and Covenants 88:87.
[59] Swinton, 4.
[60] *Salem Advertiser and Argus* (15 June 1843) quoted in *The Nauvoo Neighbor*, 12 June 1844.
[61] Mulder and Mortensen, 159.
[62] Gregg, 181.

exterior was a very clear reflection and reminder of what went on inside.[63] The building thus literally set the Saints in Nauvoo apart from their neighbors. The unique architectural elements adorning the temple tended to enhance the Mormons' sense of community and chosenness because it emphasized their initiation into and understanding of doctrines and practices that were unknown to outsiders.

The interior of the Nauvoo temple was a further statement of unique Mormon beliefs and religious rites that grounded and reified their doctrines and turned theory into embodied, spatial practice. The interior of the temple is not nearly as well-documented as the outside, primarily because once it was dedicated, access to the building was restricted to faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[64] The Mormon notion of the temple as sacred space and the only fit setting for the highest ordinances of the gospel stretched back to the ancient temples of the Bible and was reinforced by modern revelation in which God identified and accepted temples as the only place where certain ordinances could be performed.[65] For this reason, admission to the temple was limited, and those members of the church who were admitted for the most part did not leave written descriptions or sketches of the temple's interior. For detailed information on what constituted the fifty thousand square feet of interior space we are dependent on a few written accounts, including letters, journals and newspaper reports made after the Mormons' departure from Nauvoo.[66]

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[63] Leonard, 244-245; Lorena de Gaston Perry, "Classical and Near Eastern Influences on the Architectural Design of the Latter-day Saint Nauvoo Temple." Honors Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2002, 122.
[64] The only known contemporary sketch of the interior is one of the baptismal font by Henry Lewis; see Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple,* 179.
[65] The Holy Bible, King James Version, 1 Corinthians 15:29; The Doctrine and Covenants 124:28-30.
[66] The Nauvoo Temple was three times the size of the Kirtland temple, physical evidence of the doctrinal development that had occurred in recent years; Joseph Smith and his followers had a much more clear idea about what constituted temple worship, what ordinances were included, and how they were to be

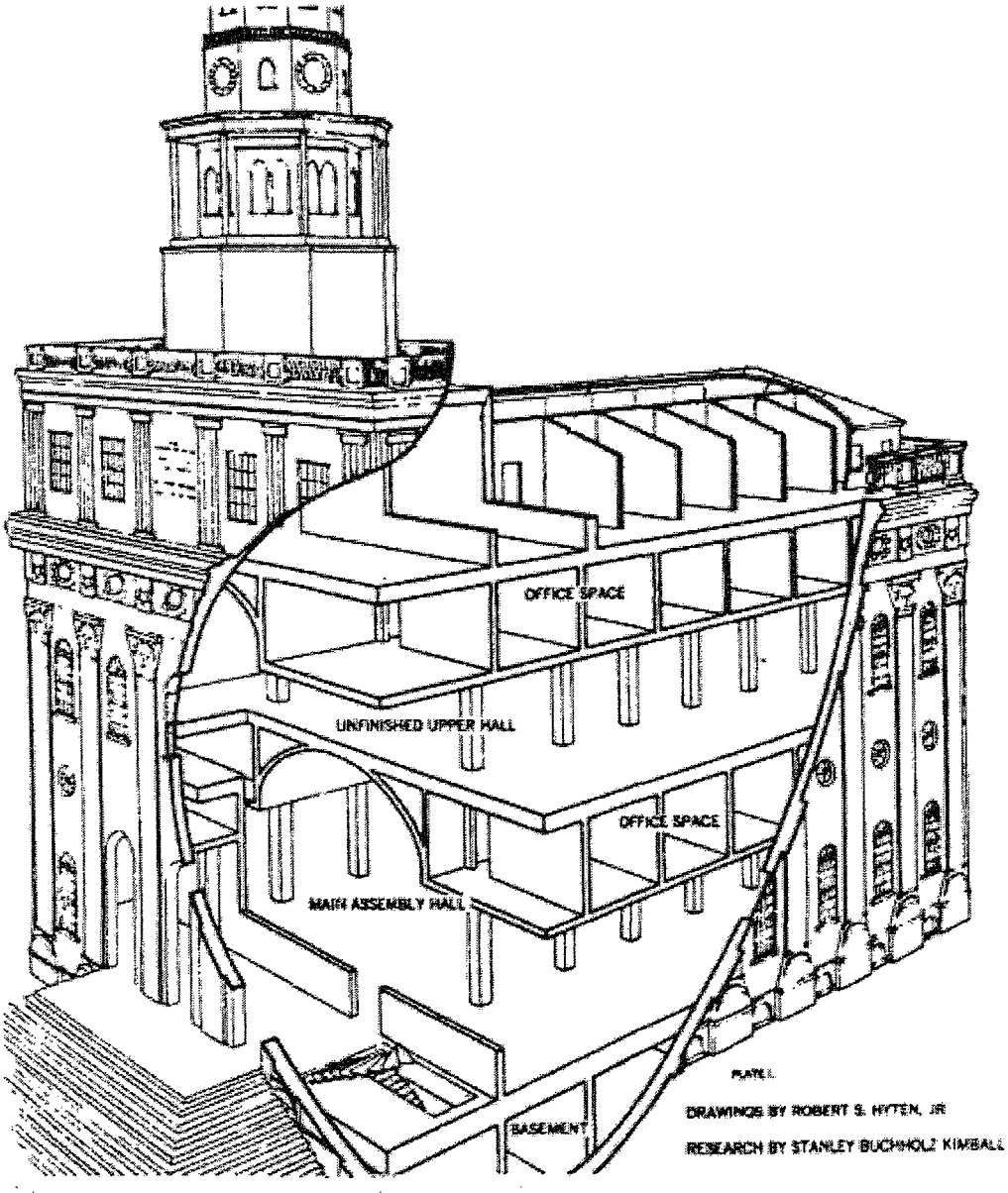

Figure 12 Interior of the Nauvoo Temple, reprinted from Hayden, 135

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performed. Leonard, 243; Waugh, 357. Interestingly, one of the few detailed reports of the interior of the temple is in "Description du Temple des Mormons" in Cabet's *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 2.*

English visitor Charles Lanman described the basement during his visit in 1847: "In the basement room, which is paved with brick, and converges to the centre, is a Baptismal Font, supported by twelve oxen, large as life, the whole executed in solid stone. Two stairways lead into it, from opposite directions, while on either side are two rooms for the recording clerks, and, all around, no less than twelve preparation rooms besides."[67] The basement was devoted to the unique practice of baptisms for the dead, by which living persons were baptized on behalf of deceased ancestors. This doctrine was first taught in Nauvoo and was temporarily practiced in the Mississippi River until Joseph Smith declared in General Conference in October 1841 that this would be discontinued until the ordinance could be performed in the temple. "Outsider" Charlotte Haven witnessed this ritual during the short time it was practiced in the river:

> [On a walk to the river] we spied quite a crowd of people, and soon perceived there was a baptism. Two elders stood knee-deep in the icy cold water, and immersed one after another as fast as they could come down the bank. We soon observed that some of them went in and were plunged several times. We were told that they were baptized for the dead who had not had an opportunity of adopting the doctrines of the Latter-day Saints. So these poor mortals in ice-cold water were releasing their ancestors and relatives from purgatory![68]

Moving the ordinance behind closed doors served to insulate it from the prying eyes and ridicule of non-believers, but it also reinforced the belief that the temple and ordinances performed in it were sacred. Baptisms were resumed in a wooden font in the basement of the temple which was later replaced by a stone font.[69]

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[67] Lanman, 31-32.
[68] Charlotte Haven, Letter to Dear home friends, 2 May 1843 in Mulder and Mortensen, 123.
[69] Baugh, 53; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:426; Betty I. Madden, *Art, crafts, and architecture in early Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 204. The baptismal font was an item of great

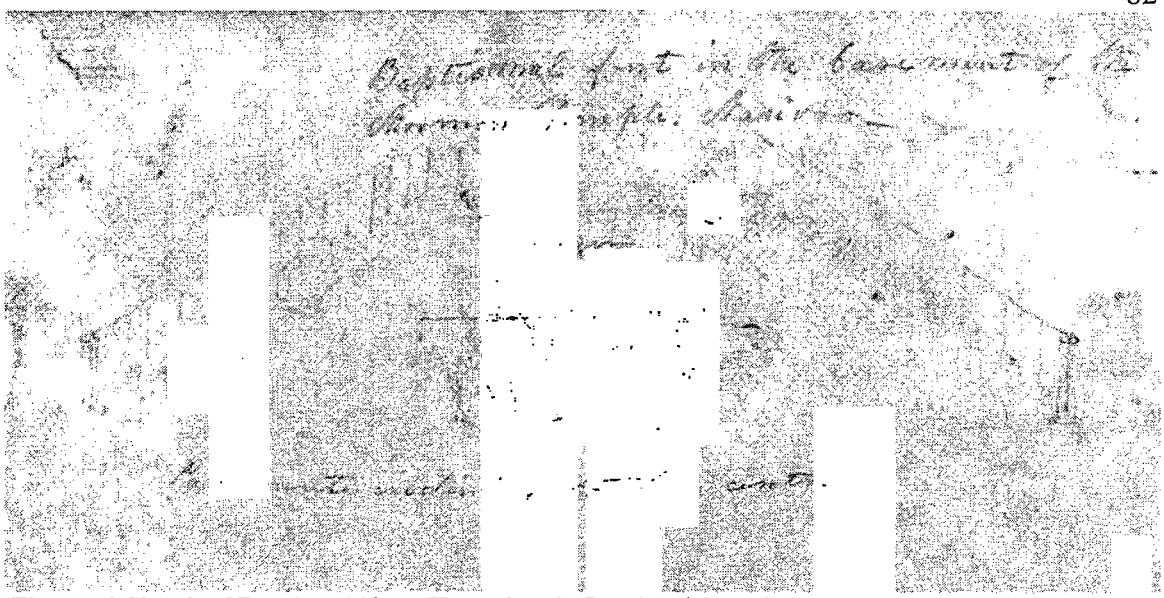

Figure 13 Sketch of Baptismal Font, Henry Lewis. Reprinted from Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 83.

Ordinances within the temple not only sacralized bonds of the community in Nauvoo, including baptisms and marriages, but connected ancestors and future progeny to an eternal life together. Believers in Joseph Smith and Mormonism were excited and enthusiastically involved in the practice of baptisms for the dead. Hundreds of Saints performed nearly sixteen thousand baptisms on behalf of the dead by 1844.[70] This unique practice revealed an increased emphasis on family and eternal continuity that emerged within the church during the Nauvoo period. Baptism for the dead transcended time by connecting the Saints to their Biblical predecessors and their own ancestors and prefigured a glorious life after death in which people would be united with those they loved. Not only did the practice provide comfort for bereaved Mormons, but it also

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interest, especially for tourists seeking souvenirs after the Mormons' departure and the temple's destruction by fire, and visitors quickly defaced it by chipping off pieces as souvenirs. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:276; John M. Bernhisel, Letter to Brigham Young, 10 September 1849, *Journal History*, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Don F. Colvin, "A Historical Study of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois," M.A. Thesis (Brigham Young University, 1962), 182-183.

[70] Richard O. Cowan, "The Nauvoo Temple," in *Joseph: Exploring the Life and Ministry of the Prophet*, eds. Susan Easton Black and Andrew C. Skinner (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 351.

reinforced a democratic sense of participation and equality among the members of the church, as prominent church leaders and average members alike participated in the ordinance.[71]

Baptisms for the dead also set Mormons apart from other Christians and their beliefs about baptisms, as is evidenced by Charlotte Haven's reaction to the practice, and it reinforced their identity as a unique community of believers. Like other Christians, Mormons believed in the universal need for baptism, but they were unlike many evangelical churches in the way they ensured the availability of this ordinance. Living members were baptized for deceased ancestors, who, they believed, could exercise their agency in the spirit world to accept or reject the ordinance performed on their behalf. Mormons acknowledged that outsiders would find it a "strange doctrine," but they also found it a "glorious" belief and a comfort, especially when faced with the grim fact of mortality that was so prevalent in the early years in Nauvoo.[72]

The main floor of the temple was taken up entirely by a "grand hall for the assemblage and worship of the people." At either end were elaborate pulpits graded into four tiers of seats representing the priesthood, in a visual representation of priesthood hierarchy. The immense space between the pulpits could accommodate 3500 people in seats that were "arranged with backs which [were] fitted like seats in modern railroad car

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[71] Andrew, 80; Gordon Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 384-385; M. Guy Bishop, "'What Has Become of our Fathers?,'" 86, 90, 96; Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 422.

[72] Sally Carlisle Randall, Letters to family and friends in New England, 21 April 1844, quoted in Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, Jill Mulvay Derr, *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 138-139.

so as to allow the spectator to sit and look in either direction, East or West."[73] There was also space for a choir and band. The dedication plaque located over the west entrance of the temple was repeated on the interior wall of the first floor with an additional inscription in gold letters reading, "The Lord has beheld our sacrifice: Come after us."[74] Almost no contemporary records describe the second story; Charles Lanman wrote that the second floor contained an auditorium "in every particular . . . precisely like that of the first," but it was apparently twenty feet longer and only partially finished.[75]

The large assembly room on the first floor was the site of most of the activity in the temple. Members gathered here for weekly sacrament meetings, during which they would pray, sing, listen to sermons and participate in the sacrament, or communion. In addition to these regular meetings, the building hosted general conferences and recreational activities. Weddings were celebrated in the large room, and there are several mentions of dancing within the temple.[76] Governor Thomas Ford records that the main assembly room in the temple was also used as a workshop as the Saints built wagons and prepared for their exodus west.[77]

The top or attic floor was the most important space in the temple. The front of the attic contained three small rooms used as waiting rooms and a pantry; the rest of the floor

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[73] J.H. Buckingham letter from Nauvoo, 18 July 1847, quoted in E. Cecil McGavin, *Nauvoo the Beautiful* (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, Inc., 1946), p.38; *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 243. For more detailed information on the pulpits see Brown and Smith, 177-178 and Luce, 36.

[74] Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 202. An article in the *Carthage Republican* also mentions altars, a "gorgeous tapestry," "ponderous chandeliers" and "innumerable columns and frescoes" but this was written nearly twenty years after the temple's destruction, and there is no other evidence of such ornaments. *Carthage Republican*, 25 February 1864, as cited in McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 95.

[75] Lanman, 31-32; Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 195.

[76] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:557; John Doyle Lee, Diary Selections, 17 December 1845 and 31 December 1845, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[77] Thomas A. Ford, *History of Illinois from its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847* (Chicago and New York: S.C. Griggs and Co.: 1854), 412.

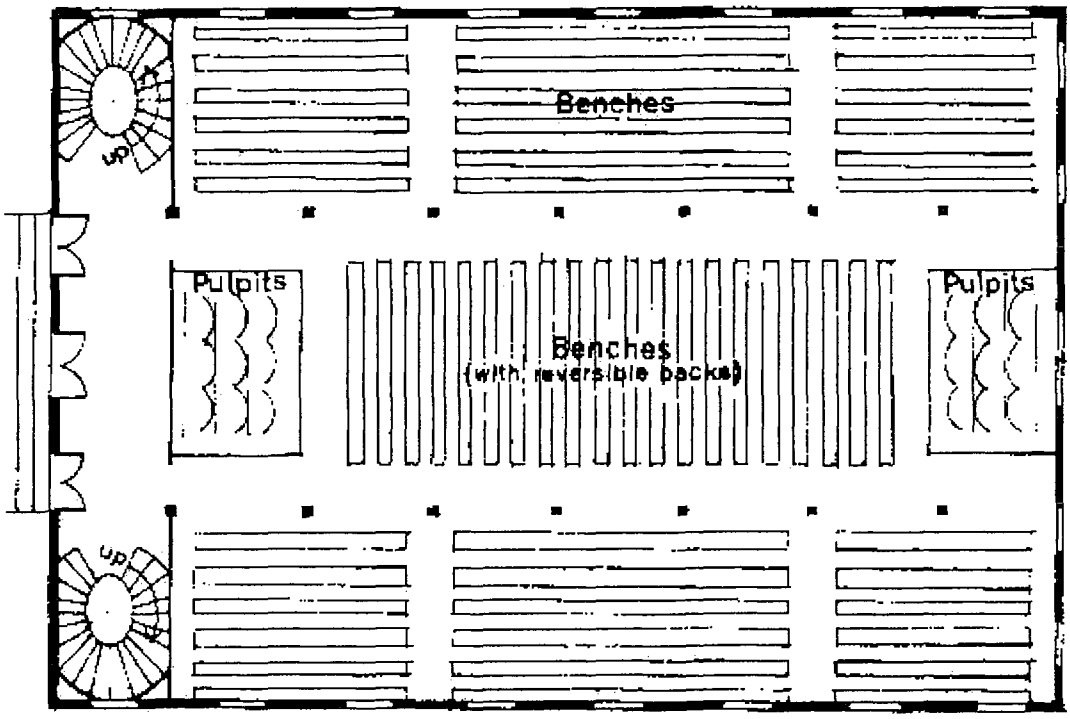

Figure 14 First Floor of the Nauvoo Temple. Reprinted from Hayden, 137.

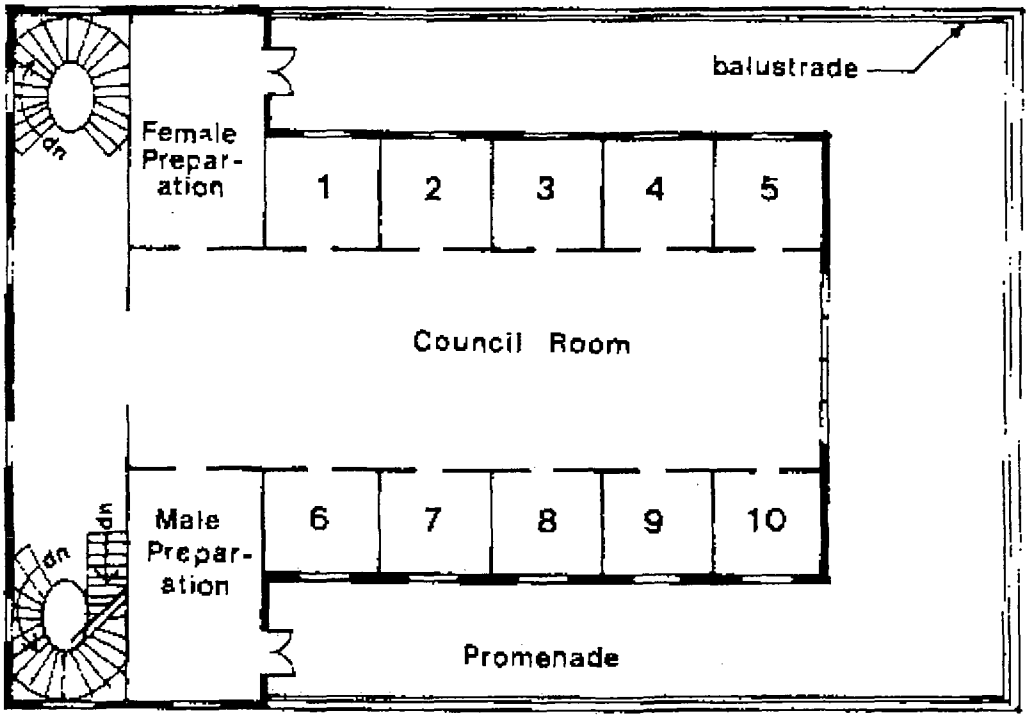

Figure 15 Third Floor of the Nauvoo Temple. Reprinted from Hayden, 138.

was devoted to ordinance rooms used for the endowment, sealings, dressing rooms and offices. The top floor included an 88' by 29' hall used for the endowment. The endowment, an ordinance performed in the attic of the temple, was the focus of temple worship. "Your endowment," Brigham Young explained, "is to receive all those ordinances. . .which are necessary for you after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father."[78] The endowment refers to a temple ordinance in which worthy adult members make promises and receive a gift or endowment of spiritual knowledge and power in return. Participants in the ordinance were led through a figurative model for life beginning with the creation and the fall of Adam. The ceremony set forth the importance of Christ's atonement, and those endowed made covenants of obedience and personal virtue with God.[79] The knowledge offered in the ceremony as well as the ritual of covenant making made the temple fundamental to Mormon theology and to the Mormon city. According to Heber C. Kimball, the room was a "very large and spacious room, perfectly light, all nicely furnished." In the center of the room were two tables and four sofas, and mirrors, paintings, and maps adorned the walls.[80] The large room was divided with canvas curtains or veils to form six smaller spaces representing distinct phases in man's eternal progress.[81] Flanking the central ordinance room were twelve small rooms, about fourteen feet square where people were

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[78] John A. Widtsoe, comp., *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977), 416.
[79] Leonard, 258-259.
[80] William Clayton, *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 206; Heber C. Kimball, Journals 1801-1848, 11 Dec 1845; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Jeni Broberg Holzapfel, *Women of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), 150-151.
[81] Richard O. Cowan, "The Nauvoo Temple" in *A City of Refuge: Quincy, Illinois*, eds. Susan Easton Black and Richard E. Bennett (Salt Lake City: Millennial Press, 2000), 286-287. For a detailed description of the celestial room see *Journal of Heber C. Kimball*, book no. 90-93.

sealed (married for eternity) and that also served as offices for church leaders, making the temple the administrative center of the church.[82]

The importance of the endowment and other temple ordinances in the Mormon mindset is illustrated by the Saints' determination to complete the temple before they left Nauvoo for the West. After Joseph Smith's death, work on completing the partially finished structure increased dramatically, largely due to Brigham Young's insistence that the temple be completed before they leave, so that the Saints could receive their endowments before undertaking their arduous journey to the west: "I wish you to distinctly understand that the counsel of the Twelve is for every family . . . to stay in Nauvoo to build the Temple and obtain the endowments to be given therein. Do not scatter. United we stand, divided we fall. . . . I would rather pay out every cent to build up this place and receive an endowment, even were I driven the next minute without anything to take with me."[83] While the Saints' immediate future in Nauvoo was in jeopardy, participating in temple ordinances affected their eternal future and offered a means to return to live with God and their loved ones. For this reason, Brigham Young and many others believed that the temple was worth every sacrifice.

According to Heber C. Kimball's journal, leaders of the church began administering endowments in the temple on 10 December 1845, the same day that Kimball met with Mr. Tucker, a representative of the Catholic Church regarding the sale of the temple and other property in Nauvoo.[84] The Saints spent four years building the temple and only six weeks receiving their endowments in it before they were forced to

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[82] Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 79-80; *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 243; Richard O. Cowan, "The Nauvoo Temple" in Black and Bennett, *A City of Refuge*, 287.
[83] McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 48; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:255-259.
[84] *Journal of Heber C. Kimball*, book no. 90-93, 15-17.

abandon the building. During this short time over 5,500 people, or roughly one-third of the members in the Nauvoo area, received their endowment.[85] Brigham Young recorded that, "Such has been the anxiety manifested by the Saints to receive the ordinances [of the Temple], and such the anxiety on our part to administer them, that I have given myself up entirely to the work of the Lord in the Temple night and day, not taking more than four hours of sleep, upon an average, per day, and going home but once a week."[86] Remarkably, those who had sacrificed so much and suffered so much persecution to see the temple completed had no complaints that they were able to enjoy the fruits of their labors for so short a time. Those who were endowed felt amply rewarded for their efforts because they now had access to salvation. John D. Lee recorded in his diary that he felt "feelings of gladness & joyful acclamation of Praise to the Giver of All good."[87] Erastus Snow declared that, "The spirit, power and wisdom of God reigned continually in the temple and all felt satisfied that during the two months we occupied it in the endowments of the Saints, we were amply paid for all our labor in building it."[88]

Those who had received their endowment were then able to participate in the highest temple ordinance, the sealing. This ordinance was performed in the small side rooms in the attic story of the temple that contained an altar. In this ordinance a man and

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[85] Only adults participated in the endowment, so the actual percentage of those endowed in the temple among those eligible would have been higher than one-third. George and Sylvia Givens, *Nauvoo Fact Book: Questions and Answers for Nauvoo Enthusiasts* (Lynchburg, VA: Parley Street Publishers, 2000), 161; McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 69; Richard O. Cowan, "The Nauvoo Temple" in Black and Bennett, *A City of Refuge*, 289; Devery S. Anderson, "The Anointed Quorum in Nauvoo, 1842-45," *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 156; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:xxv; Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 107.

[86] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:567.

[87] John Doyle Lee, Diary Selections, 5 Feb 1844-25 Jan 1846, 1-2.

[88] Erastus Snow, Journal, 94-95, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Milton V. Backman, *People and Power of Nauvoo: Themes from the Nauvoo Experience* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), 62.

his wife were joined through covenants in an everlasting union that would last beyond death. This ordinance also made them eligible for salvation with their loved ones, and it linked families across generations, forming a chain of extended family members through time. Mormon believers understood that through the sealing ordinances families could be bound together forever and could be exalted as an eternal family unit after death.[89]

The temple served to locate Mormon believers in time and space and to reinforce their physical link to ancient Israel. It connected them with Solomon's temple and the temple at Jerusalem and reinforced Mormons' self-concept as heirs of ancient Israel and as God's chosen people in the last days. The temple clearly illustrated and embodied the Mormon's unique sense of space, their concept of the holy city or Zion, their identity as God's chosen people, and their location in time as latter-day heirs of Israel preparing for a glorious future. The temple not only collapsed temporal space and time by connecting the Saints with their sacred past, but it collapsed sacred space and time as well. By participating in temple ordinances, particularly the endowment, they could symbolically walk the stages of earthly life into eternity and figuratively back into the presence of God. Temple ordinances enacted a sort of pilgrimage replicating a cosmological journey that connected earth to heaven and the present to a glorious eternity.

In spite of the tremendous effort devoted to finishing the temple and its importance to the Mormon community at Nauvoo, the Saints knew they would soon be forced to leave it. The Saints enjoyed the temple for only a few months; the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo began a mere two months after endowments were first performed in

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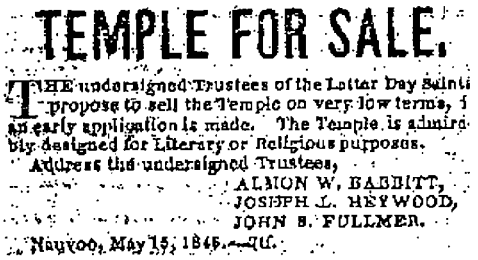
[89] Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 116, 123.

the temple.[90] Brigham Young and other church leaders were conflicted as to what should be done with the temple. They were unwilling to abandon to desecration what they considered an important symbol of unity and common belief to their community. But they were also faced with the necessity of transporting a largely impoverished population to the west and starting over once again to build an entirely new city. Months before the temple was completed, Brigham Young announced that they did not expect to find a purchaser for the temple, but they were willing to rent it "to a respectable community who may inhabit the city."[91] Later, desperate for funds to finance the removal of thousands of people to the west, Brigham Young and other leaders determined to sell the temple; this was put to a sustaining vote at the dedication of the temple, and all but one person approved the intention to sell the building.[92] Apparently church leaders initially intended to sell the whole city, lock, stock and barrel, to an organized community like the Icarians who would later inhabit Nauvoo. Ads to sell the temple remarked on its suitability for "educational or religious purposes," prefiguring its purchase by a communal society and


TEMPLE FOR SALE.

THE undersigned Trustees of the Latter Day Saints propose to sell the Temple on very low terms, if an early application is made. The Temple is admirably designed for Literary or Religious purposes. Address the undersigned Trustees,

ALMON W. BABBITT,
JOSEPH L. HEYWOOD,
JOHN S. FULLMER.

Nauvoo, May 15, 1845.—tf.

Figure 16 Ad for the Temple, ***Hancock Eagle.*** Brigham Young University Special Collections.

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[90] Church leaders began soliciting prospective buyers for the temple and other properties in Nauvoo in the fall of 1845. John Taylor Nauvoo Journal, 15 September 1845, ed. Dean C. Jessee (Provo: Grandin Book Co., 1996), 109; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:542.

[91] *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 1 Oct 1845; David E. Miller and Della S. Miller, *Nauvoo: The City of Joseph*, 2nd ed. Ed. David H. Miller (Salt Lake City: Publisher's Press, 1996), 195.

[92] Lisle G. Brown, "'A Perfect Estopel': Selling the Nauvoo Temple," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 69. The price was originally set at $200,000 but then reduced to $125,000 and finally offered for rent at $400 a year "just to keep it in repairs. Church trustees were at the same time trying to sell the temple at Kirtland, although this effort did not attract the same amount of attention as the concurrent sale of the Nauvoo Temple. See *Hancock Eagle* 1, no. 15, 17 July 1846, microfilm, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Richard E. Bennett, "Eastward to Eden: The Nauvoo Rescue Missions," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 102-103.

its eventual transformation into the Icarian schoolhouse.[93] Church leaders first approached the Catholics in a letter to John B. Purcell, archbishop of the diocese of Cincinnati, proposing to sell all or part of the city. Apostle Orson Pratt also met with Robert Owen and reported that Owen was considering buying the town with the intention of locating the Owenites at Nauvoo. Other prospective buyers had plans to convert the building into "a retreat for poor widows and other females" or a college for the American Home Missionary Society of New York.[94] But for one reason or another all negotiations fell through, and an unknown arsonist burned the temple on 19 November 1848.[95] Although no one was ever convicted, the primary suspect in the case was a non-Mormon, Joseph Agnew. Lewis Bidamon, a non-Mormon who later married Emma Smith, reported that citizens of surrounding settlements paid Agnew $500 to destroy the building "in consequence of jealousy that Nauvoo would still retain its superior importance as a town and might induce the Mormons to return."[96] Bidamon's comment reveals that non-Mormons recognized the tremendous affective power of the temple and the strong inducement it offered for the Mormons' eventual return to Nauvoo. The temple, even empty and abandoned, posed a threat to non-Mormons in the area. Local non-Mormons could not believe that the Saints would just walk away from the temple that represented

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[93] *Nauvoo New Citizen* 1, no. 3, 23 Dec 1846, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[94] *Journal History of the Church*, 16 September 1845 and 27 January 1848; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:508-509; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Importance of the Temple in Understanding the Latter-day Saint Nauvoo Experience Then and Now," paper presented at the Leonard J. Arrington Mormon History Lecture Series, no.6, 25 October 2000 (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2001), Special Collections, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 6.

[95] "Nauvoo and Deseret," *The International Magazine of literature, art, and science* 4, no. 5 (December 1851): 582, Library of Congress, American Memory, "The Nineteenth Century in Print: Periodicals," <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/moahtml/snchome.html>>, 27 September 2007.

[96] *Journal History of the Church*, 9 October 1848. See also Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, pp.261-267.

such a tremendous emotional and financial investment. They worried that the Mormons would come to reclaim the temple and the city and re-exert their political and social influence within the state.[97]

The destruction of the temple was a crushing blow to the Mormon community. Mary Field Gardner commented that "It is impossible to describe the feelings of the saints to see their sacred temple . . . being destroyed."[98] But for Brigham Young the fire resolved his earlier doubts about the propriety of selling or renting the sacred structure. His reaction to the temple fire was a calm declaration: "If it is the will of the Lord that the Temple be burned, instead of being defiled by the Gentiles, Amen to it."[99] In spite of their sacrifices for the temple and their forced abandonment of a building that had cost so much, most of the Mormon Saints agreed with their new prophet. The temple was the ultimate expression of their faith and sacrifice, a sacred space where they had entered into covenants with God and glimpsed eternity. Many preferred to see it destroyed than to see it defiled by a profane group. Its destruction ensured its continuing sacredness.

The "High Peak" of Icarianism

The impact of the temple on Nauvoo did not end with the act of an arsonist. The building or its remains drew attention to both the Mormons and the Icarians—as late as 1861 the ruins of the temple were still "the most conspicuous object in the area." The fire had gutted the building, but the massive stone walls remained standing, towering one

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[97] McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 57; Garno. "Gendered Utopia," 489.
[98] Quoted in Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 267.
[99] *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City) 14 October 1863; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:581.

hundred feet over the surrounding landscape, and they still attracted much attention.[100] By early 1849, a month after his arrival in New Orleans, Cabet had begun to take notice of Nauvoo and the temple as a possible new home for his French communist community.[101] When Cabet arrived with his followers in Nauvoo on 15 March 1849, he was so impressed by the blackened walls of the temple that he almost immediately made arrangements to purchase it from Mormon agents in Nauvoo. Exultant over the purchase, Cabet declared the ruined temple "one of the most beautiful monuments in America."[102] Cabet hoped to capitalize on the fame and attraction the Mormon temple possessed and turn it to the advantage of his own fledgling community. He confessed his hopes regarding the temple to his friend and colleague, Krowlikowski: "We are going to buy the Mormon temple. . . . We hope the effect of this purchase will be great in America and in France"[103] Cabet envisioned the temple becoming a monument to the community and a beacon of the Icarian foundational tenets of reason, equality, and fraternity. This "grand common house" would constitute a single, predominant architectural statement of Icarian values and would create a "high peak" from which "republican, communitarian doctrine and [the] evangelical principles of Fraternity of Men and People would be sent out."[104]

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[100] Miller and Miller, 119; *Popular Tribune: Journal of Reform and Social Reorganization, Organ of the Icarian Community* (Nauvoo) 19 July 1851, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>, 19 September 2007; Étienne Cabet, "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 16 au 22 Juin 1850" Étienne Cabet Papers, 1850-1851. Folder 1. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[101] The first mention of the Mormons and their temple was in the 18 February 1849 issue of *Le Populaire*. Cabet mentioned it in a letter dated 25 March 1849, Southern Illinois University Collection, Folder 8, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

[102] Lettre de M. Cabet, 25 March 1849, Gundy Collection, Box 3, Folder 34, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

[103] Quoted in Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur, Étienne Cabet* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1972), 247.

[104] Francis and Gontier, 15; Étienne Cabet, *Credo Communiste* (Paris: Prevot, [1841]), in *Le Communisme Icarien: de 1840 à 1847* (Paris: EDHIS [Éditions d'histoire sociale], 1979), Bibliothèque nationale de

Cabet was consumed by his grand plans for the temple. One of Cabet's secretaries, Emile Vallet, wrote that, "the Temple ruins worked on Cabet's brain." They "were renowned already and when connected with [Cabet's] name, they both would add to each other's glory."[105] However, Cabet's vision and hopes for the temple were not universally shared. Icarian finances were limited after the debacle in Texas and their prolonged stay in New Orleans. The Icarians could not afford to purchase both the ruins and the land necessary to sustain the community. Some members argued that, "it was not practical, nor wise to think of glory, of monuments when they had no certainty of having bread for their families." Cabet made the decision to purchase Temple Square and the temple ruins only after "many long discussions," and even then he was the target of "an energetic reproach."[106]

Cabet purchased the property on 2 April 1849 from the Mormon trustees Babbitt and LeBaron. For the sum of two thousand dollars he obtained the temple block as well as parts of the two blocks west of the temple. This purchase included eleven acres of land, the Mormon arsenal and the Mormon temple.[107] Cabet bought the ruins of the temple, including "all cut

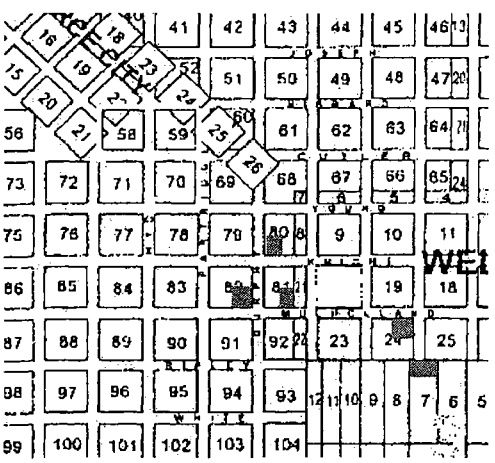

Figure 17 Icarian Property in Nauvoo, Hancock County Property Records.

France, Gallica, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>, 27 September 2007; Cabet, *Le Vrai Christianisme*, 57; *Le Populaire*, 7 April 1850.

[105] Vallet, 20.

[106] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 490, footnote 14; Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 76.

[107] Letter of M. Cabet in the *Missouri Republican*, 18 April 1849 in Étienne Cabet, *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 2*, 32; Janath Cannon, *Nauvoo Panorama* (USA: Nauvoo Restoration Inc., 1991), p.52.

or chisel dressed stone on said premises" for one thousand dollars.[108] The purchase of the temple confirmed Cabet's hopes for attention. *Le Populaire* reported that the *Courrier des États-Unis* and several newspapers in France announced that the *gérant* of Icaria had recently acquired "the celebrated Nauvoo Temple."[109]

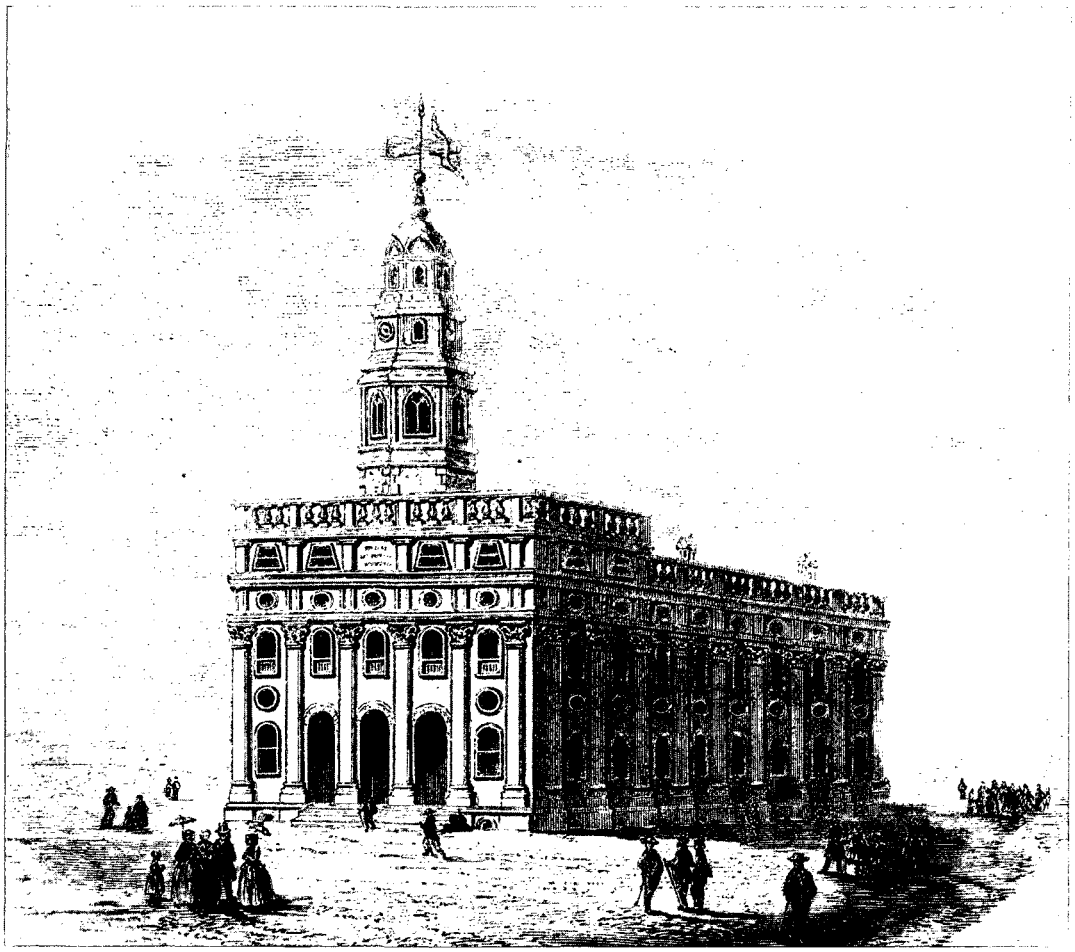

Figure 18 Temple Mormon de Nauvoo. Varin, tin engraving, 19th century. This engraving by a French artist shows interest in and awareness of the Nauvoo Temple in France. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

[108] Susan Easton Black, Harvey B. Black, and Brandon Plewe, *Property Transactions in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, and Surrounding Communities, 1839-1859*. 7 vols. (Wilmington, DE: World Vital Records, Inc., 2006), 685; Cabet, *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 4*, 62-63; Vallet, 20.
[109] The Icarians actually only paid $500 of this sum, and the inhabitants of Nauvoo contributed the other half as a donation. *Le Populaire*, 20 May 1849.

Cabet intended the temple to be the focal point of Icaria as it had been the center of the Mormon community at Nauvoo. Cabet purchased the temple with the view of making it *the* public building and center of the community both "spiritually and materially."[110] Immediately after his big purchase, Cabet announced his plans for the building:

> As for the Temple, the four walls remaining after last year's fire we will retain to conserve its exterior form, if we find the support for such a project. We will rebuild in wood the four floors with a terrace that will offer one of the most beautiful views of the entire Globe; and in these four floors we will have a refectory seating one thousand people, our kitchens and their accessories, our women's workshops, our shops, lodging for five hundred individuals, with a room for each family, our schools, our library, our meeting hall and our offices, with a beautiful garden and a promenade through the four acres surrounding the temple.[111]

In this, Cabet's first official correspondence with the press and people of the area, Cabet did not outline the community's doctrines or practices, their history or plans, but instead focused on the physical layout of the city, their purchases and plans for the buildings and land, especially the temple. Several newspapers reported on the Icarians' plans for the building, focusing on the buildings' use as a school and common dining hall.[112]

But Cabet's great plans for the building were never realized. In September of 1849 Mormon missionary John M. Bernhisel visited the city and wrote to Brigham Young that, "Though the walls of the temple are still standing, yet they are much cracked, especially the east one; and not a vestige of the once beautiful font remains. There had been nothing done to rebuild it, except clearing away some rubbish, and it is highly

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[110] Yaacov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 196.

[111] Letter of M. Cabet in the *Missouri Republican*, 18 April 1849, in Cabet, *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no.2*, 33.

[112] *Missouri Republican*, 18 April 1849; *The New York Weekly Tribune*, 29 June 1850, David Martin Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

probable there will never be anything more done. The Temple is enclosed with a rude fence, and is used as a sheepfold and a cow pen."[113] No work was done on the temple for a year and a half because the Icarians didn't have the means to repair it. It was only after the colony purchased a mill and whiskey distillery that they were able to generate the funds necessary to repair "the gigantic edifice, the Temple, the most considerable property of the Colony which has remained unused to this point, due to necessary repairs."[114] In spring of 1850, masons began to repair the stonework on the temple, but their work was interrupted on 27 May by a tornado, which blew down the north wall. Cabet described the impact of the disaster on the community:

> The dreadful tornado on May 27th which invaded the city of Nauvoo and neighboring places, has been for us, *Icarians*. . . a spectacle of frightful sublimity, and also a source of mortal anguish, on account of the disasters and catastrophes which have resulted from it, to the inhabitants of this county, and to us. Here are some of the particulars of what has happened to us during that storm; in its first blow which has been the most fatal to us, and everyone will certainly think so when they know, that part of the Temple walls was immediately blown to the ground. The Temple which we were preparing so actively and resolutely to rebuild; the Temple which we hoped to cover this year; and in which we were to settle our refectories, our halls of reunion, and our schools; that it is the Temple that gigantic monument, which has become the first victim of the tornado.[115]

The next day the general assembly decided to tear down the south and east walls as they were dangerously damaged from the storm. This left only the west wall of the building with its arched portico overlooking the Mississippi River. Even with only one wall standing, the temple still attracted considerable attention until its final complete demolition in 1865. This tornado effectively put an end to Cabet's vision of the

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[113] *Journal History of the Church*, 10 September 1849.
[114] Bonnaud, 108.
[115] *Nauvoo Patriot*, 27 May 1850, in *Journal History of the Church.*

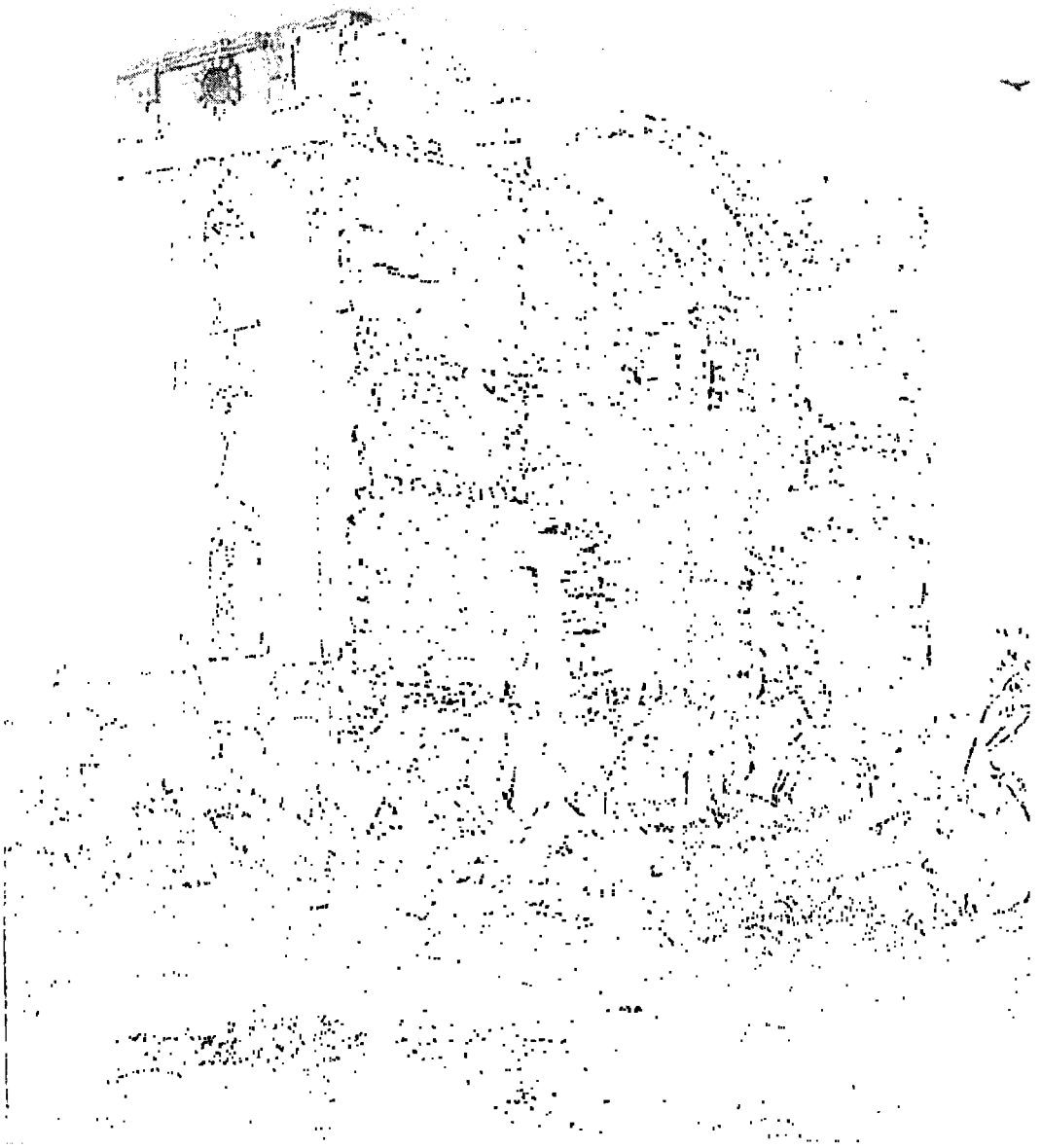

Figure 19 Ruins of the Nauvoo Temple, engraving by C. Fenn from drawing by Frederick Hawkins Piercy, 1853. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

temple as a monument to the Icarian principles of equality, fraternity and education. The temple was reduced to a quarry, its stones used for the construction of other buildings—workshops, a school and the refectory.[116]

The destruction of the temple was a significant financial blow to the Icarians. While it did not immediately destroy the community, it crippled them, and they struggled financially for the rest of their stay in Nauvoo. However, some Icarians saw the benefit of the storm. Pierre Bourg surmised the storm was favorable because the temple walls had been "barely solid, out of plumb" and were not safe; he thought that attempts to rebuild the temple were "reckless." The storm gave the Icarians the opportunity to construct new buildings "more in harmony with our means" from the "beautiful materials of the temple."[117] But the destruction of the temple also meant the destruction of the center and pinnacle of the Icarian community, the one building that would unite Icarian energies and ideals into a single, powerful statement of Icarianism.

Instead, these energies and ideals were distributed throughout the community. The Icarians dismantled the walls of the temple and scattered the stones throughout the community, placing them in the foundation of various buildings. Even after the disastrous tornado, Cabet and his followers announced their intention to "build another large and fine edifice." But their resources had been too much tied up in the temple, and they were forced to "begin again on the place of the temple, provisional and urgent construction."[118] The distribution of the temple stone and the resources devoted to building subsequent to

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[116] The Nauvoo City Council ordered the dismantling of the remaining west wall as a safety precaution. *Missouri Republican,* 3 December 1859, *Journal History of the Church*; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," *BYU Studies* 41, no. 4 (2002): 7.
[117] Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria,* 57.
[118] *Deseret News,* 24 August 1850, quoted in Joseph Earl Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (December 1947): 424.

the destruction of the temple are an index of Cabet's and the Icarians' priorities. Most of the resources were devoted to what Cabet considered the most important buildings of the community—the school and the refectory, which represented his foundational Icarian tenets of education, equality and fraternity. These "provisional constructions" became permanent, and the precarious position of the Icarians never allowed them to realize an edifice similar in scale and importance to the temple. These various constructions replaced the single structure of the temple and created several focal points that competed for ideological and architectural prominence and for the limited Icarian resources.

Figure 20 Icarian Schoolhouse built from temple stone. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

The Icarians used most of the temple materials to construct the schoolhouse, which became one of the community's most important buildings. The sunstones that served as capitals of the temple columns were turned on their side and used in the

foundation of the building.[119] The two-story limestone building contained classrooms on the ground floor with dormitories above. The building was divided into two sections for boys and girls, each section containing classrooms, dormitories and a courtyard to accommodate approximately forty male and forty female students.[120] The Icarians chose to locate the building on the southwest corner of temple square, perched on the edge of the bluff, closest to the main ferry landing in Nauvoo, and therefore in the place that would attract the most attention. This building, with its hand-carved stone and prominent location, was meant to be one of the showpieces of Icaria, illustrating the importance of education as one of the main tenets and a primary attraction of Icarian doctrine and practice. The Icarian schoolhouse was the only building in the community built entirely from temple stone, which emphasizes the importance of the school both in Cabet's mind and in the Icarian system as a whole. While Mormon converts first noticed and visited the temple, Icarian newcomers first remarked and commented on the schoolhouse. Utopian scholar Seymour R. Kesten called the school "an undistinguished little schoolhouse made from the rubble of the temple the Mormons had abandoned when they went west, [that] gave no indication of the paramount place that education held in the Icarian system."[121] But the Icarians themselves saw it differently. The importance of the school is emphasized in contemporary Icarian descriptions: the school was the "most noticeable"

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[119] The existence of these sunstones was unknown until 1971 when architects studied the Icarian schoolhouse, then serving as the Visitor's Center for Mormon Nauvoo. Of the thirty original sunstones, the existence of only three was known then. Architect Steven Baird discovered a total of five additional sunstones in the foundation of the building, four to six feet under the building. *Church News*, 7 August 1971, 5.

[120] Ida Blum, "History of Temple Block links past with present," Kruse Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," 11; excerpt from the *Revue Socialiste*, (Paris) September 1897, quoted in Benevolo, 78-79, footnote 49.

[121] Seymour R. Kesten, *Utopian Episodes: Daily Life in Experimental Colonies Dedicated to Changing the World* (New York: Syracuse UP, 1993), 118.

and "most magnificent" building in the community, and descriptions often included the fact that it was made of "hand-carved limestone" to emphasize the value and importance of the building.[122] A letter from Icarian member Davis shows the prominence of the building both physically and ideologically in the community: "My apartment overlooks our charming garden, which gradually descends to the river, and my view is blocked only by the school. When upon debarking, I saw it [the school] for the first time and, from the first person I met, I learned what this beautiful stone building was, almost as solid as the eternal hills, my heart leaped with joy. Oh, I cried, the wisdom in making education the primary foundation of our system to enlighten and enliven Humanity is worthy of our trust."[123] To Icarian believers the school was both the foundation and pinnacle of the community, a physical representation of the importance of education in Icaria, their beacon to a corrupt world and their hope for the future.

Letters such as the one penned by Davis convey a sense of pride and ownership in this most important building. However, this significant structure was off-limits to most of the members of the community. While the temple promoted a sense of participation, ownership and democracy among the Mormons, the most important Icarian building made from temple stone created a sense of division and inequality. A fence surrounding the schoolhouse defined its confines not as sacred, but as inaccessible to any but the elite.

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[122] Benevolo, 78-79, footnote 49; Lillian Snyder, "Socialization and Education of Children in the Icarian Colony of Nauvoo, Illinois, 1849-1860" (paper presented at conference "Kibbutz and Communes, Past and Future" at University of Tel Aviv, Israel, 20 May 1985), 8, Gundy Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, University of Western Illinois, Macomb, Illinois; Lillian Snyder, *The Search for Brotherhood, Peace and Justice: The Story of Icaria* (Deep River, IO: Brennan Printing, 1996), 64; Étienne Cabet, "Progrès de la Colonie Icarienne" in *La Colonie Icarienne: Journal d'organisation sociale* (19 July 1854), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>, 19 September 2007; Étienne Cabet, *Prospectus; Émigration Icarienne; Conditions d'admission; Rapport de la gérance à l'Assemblée nationale* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1852), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>, 19 September 2007.

[123] Letter from Davis, in Icarie to Paterson, *La Colonie Icarienne*, November 1854.

Cabet, the teachers and important visitors were apparently the only adults permitted in the school. Most of the members of the community were denied access to the building that was supposed to be the affective and ideological center of the Icarian community. Parents were barred from the school where their children both learned and lived for most of the week, and they could only watch their children through the fence. Only on Sundays were children allowed to leave the school and spend time with their families. Cabet's careful control of the school profoundly affected parenting and home life in the community and eventually became the source of much conflict within Icaria.

In spite of this seeming contradiction, the school was to be Icaria's finest piece of propaganda, a proclamation in "*pierres de taille*" of the potential of the Icarian program. Étienne Cabet envisioned the school as "a small community" and "a model of fraternity and order."[124] In his pamphlets and articles Cabet constantly referred to the school, the progress in its construction, the curriculum, and the abilities of the students as concrete evidence of Icaria's success and promise. Education and the school as propaganda worked: nearby citizens became aware of the new community in their midst and wrote requesting permission to admit their children to the Icarian school. Outsiders' interest was apparently limited to the community's educational opportunities, but a closer association with the community could have created potential new members, which were badly needed to keep the community afloat. However, Cabet respectfully replied that they

[124] *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 July 1854. Étienne Cabet, "Progrès de la Colonie Icarienne établie à Nauvoo" (Paris: l'Auteur, 1854), 10-11, St. Louis Public Library Collection, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

were not prepared at the time to admit other students, keeping non-Icarians at a distance and reinforcing the insular nature of the Icarian community.[125]

The prominence of the school in the physical arrangements of the community and in the writings of Cabet reveals its important place in his communal system. Cabet declared that education was "the primary foundation of Society in Icaria, the first interest of the Community."[126] Education as the fundamental base for Icaria became Cabet's mantra; he repeated it over and over in his numerous publications. Education was fundamentally important to Icaria because it was the means of training the rising generation in the practice of communism uncorrupted by the outside world or the older generation that was tainted by that world. Cabet called children the "hope" and "treasure" of the community and recognized that Icaria's eventual success or failure depended on the rising generation.[127] He essentially believed that he could create utopia through his almost exclusive control over the community's children. Cabet saw education as the panacea for all the world's ills and the preemptive solution to any potential problems in Icaria. Cabet stated in *Voyage en Icarie* that education and reason would naturally lead people to enlightened, universal opinions, thus avoiding any disagreement or dissension within the community.[128] In Cabet's system it was education that eliminated greed, that

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[125] *The Popular Tribune*; Letter, Étienne Cabet to Homer Brown of Hamilton, IL, 14 December 1855, Illinois State Historical Library Collection, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; "The Icarian Community at Nauvoo," *Daily Journal* (Springfield, IL) 2 July 1851, Gundy Collection, Box 3, Folder 32, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

[126] Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*. 4 ed.; *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 July 1854; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 74.

[127] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 89; Étienne Cabet, "Woman," *Popular Tribune*, 19 July 1851; Vallet, 30; Cabet, *Le Vrai Christianisme*, 442, 623; Étienne Cabet, "True Christianity," *Nauvoo Tribune: A Journal devoted to Politics, Socialism, Communism, Science, Agriculture, &c.* (Nauvoo) 4 July 1854, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Gallica, <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>, 19 September 2007.

[128] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 170.

taught respect for women, and that saved marriage and the family from their degraded state. Any problems or social ills existing in the outside world—laziness, innate disparities among people, drunkenness, thievery, aversion to distasteful work—were banished in Icaria through education.[129]

To emphasize the importance of education, Cabet couched it in religious terms: Icarian education would be the "eternal salvation" of Communism.[130] Cabet viewed education and culture as having "divine" influence over the minds and manners of the community members. Moreover, he viewed Jesus primarily as a great teacher, writing that Jesus sought the poor and sick to teach them.[131] Cabet believed in the injunction of Jesus to "be ye therefore perfect," but he declared that perfection did not come through any savior or religious system. Cabet declared that education rather than religion was the supreme means of bringing about human perfection.[132] Because of the transcendent importance of education in the Icarian system, for Cabet and the Icarians an ordinary stone schoolhouse was sacralized and transformed. The different views of the school illustrate Eliade's comment on the sacred:

> By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes *something else*, yet it continues to remain *itself*, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A *sacred* stone remains a stone; apparent (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone [or building made from stone] reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a

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[129] Étienne Cabet, "Woman," *Popular Tribune*, 19 July 1851; Étienne Cabet, *Douze Lettres d'un communiste à un réformiste sur la communauté* (Paris: Impr. de E.B. Delanchy, 1841), 135-139.
[130] Cabet, "Progrès de la Colonie Icarienne," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 July 1854; Cabet, "Progrès de la Colonie Icarienne établie à Nauvoo."
[131] Cabet, *Douze Lettres*, 5; Cabet, *Almanach Icarien*, 149-150.
[132] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 607; Étienne Cabet, *Credo Communiste*. Paris: Prevot, [1841] in *Le Communisme Icarien: de 1840 à 1847*; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 26; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 170.

> supernatural reality. In other words, for those who have a religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as a cosmic sacrality.[133]

In other words, the nature of the thing changes for believers. While Kesten saw a ramshackle building made of rubble, Davis saw an exquisite building of hand-hewn limestone, "as solid as the eternal hills." For the Icarians then, an ordinary stone building became the embodied means of salvation for their entire community.

The only Icarian building to vie in importance and prominence with the school was the refectory, the most noticeable and the most visited building in the community. In his description of Icaria, Jean-Claude Cretinon remarked that people stopping at Nauvoo often visited the refectory rather than the school.[134] The refectory was by far the largest building in Icaria and the center of most of its activities. Located on the northeast corner of Temple Square, the refectory constituted a second focal point of the community, embodying the Icarian ideals of fraternity and equality. The refectory was a two-story frame building with a cellar and a balcony running around the second floor. The first floor contained a kitchen, a dining room seating four hundred, a theater, and linen and dressmakers' shops. The second floor was divided into rooms, approximately sixteen by twenty feet, for lodging some families and most of the single men in the community.[135]

In its design, decoration and uses, the refectory illustrated in theory and in practice the preeminence of the Icarian doctrine of equality. From written reports, it is evident that the building was 120 feet long and forty feet wide. The L-shaped frame building was ornamented only by windows and a balcony running along the second floor.

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[133] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 12.
[134] Rude, *Voyage en Icarie*, 146.
[135] Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: Gateway to the West* (Carthage, IL: Journal Printing, 1974), 121; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," 11-12; Vallet, 24.

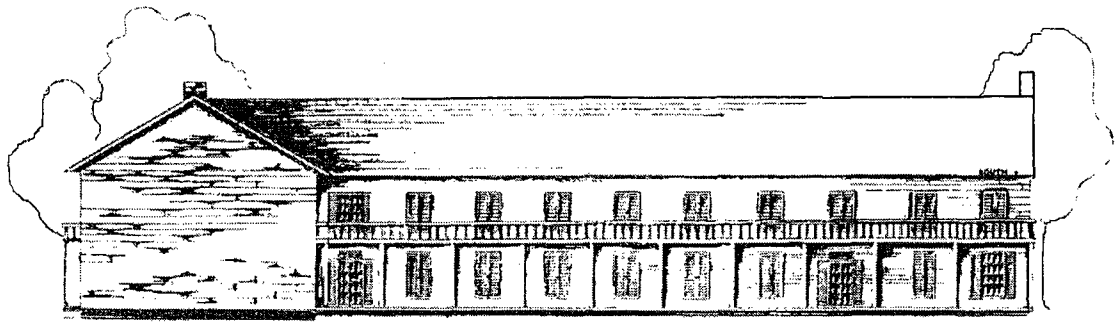

Figure 21 Conjectural Drawing of the Icarian Refectory. Reprint from Rogers, 120.

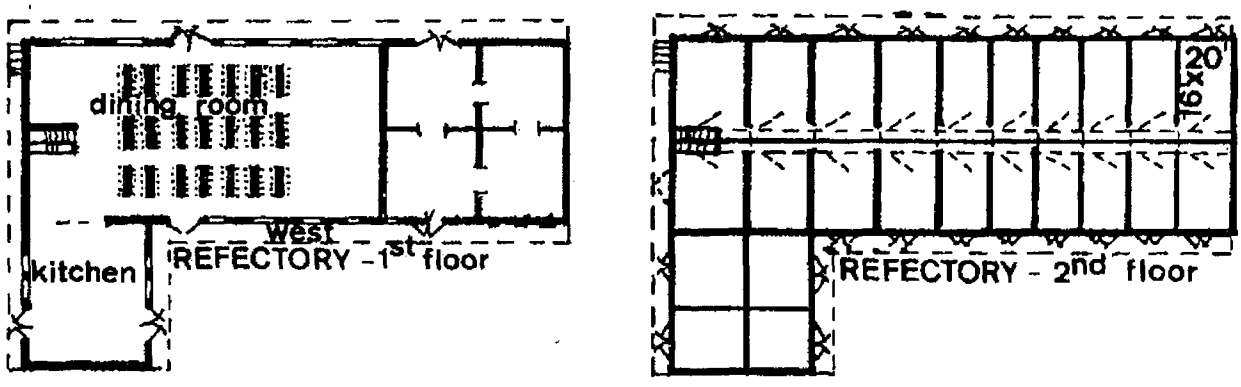

Figure 22 Interior of the Icarian Refectory. Reprint from Rogers, 122.

The main door opened out onto the open area in the middle of Temple Square and the center of Icaria.[136] The symmetry and simplicity of the building was in keeping with the Icarians' economic circumstances, but was also a statement of the Icarian values of order, equality and a focus on the necessary. The interior of the refectory was a visual lesson in Icarian philosophy. The walls of the dining hall were painted with inscriptions of Icarian principles regarding Fraternity, Equality, Work, etc. to "remind Icarians of the most useful maxims and to expose the same to the view of visitors." For example the walls proclaimed, "All for one, and one for all," and that "*Fraternité* is the summation of all principles."[137] Equality was further illustrated on the second floor, where Icarians, mostly bachelors, were lodged. Each room was the same size and identically furnished with only the bare necessities: a bed made of white pine, a heavy padded wooden chair, a small wooden table, and such niceties as a candlestick, a broom and a bucket. Often the residents had to use their own trunks as cupboards or chairs for visitors.[138]

Figure 23 Icarian Chair. Lillian Snyder Private Collection.

The activities carried on within the refectory were highly ritualized, illustrating the focus on equality and fraternity. Equality was strictly enforced by the arrangement of the dining room. Icarian regulations required members to eat the communal meals in the

[136] Few descriptions and no known photos exist of the building that was the center of Icarian activity; the building burned down sometime after 1864. See also Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 111-112.

[137] Vallet, 24. Étienne Cabet, "Célébration à Nauvoo du 7e anniversaire du départ de la première avant-garde Icarienne" (Paris: l'Auteur, 1855), 10, Bibliothèque nationale de France. For a complete index of the inscriptions on the dining room walls see Rude, *Voyage en Icarie*, 257-266, Appendix III.

[138] Rude, *Voyage en Icarie*, 150; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," 8.

refectory unless they were ill. They sat in assigned places at long pine tables at identical chairs that were numbered to preserve order and equality and to prevent preferential seating. The mandatory seating arrangements avoided arguments over seating when members wanted to sit closest to the kitchen to be served first; it also kept members from forming cliques during mealtimes or seating themselves according to personal preference.[139] The meals in common reinforced the important Icarian tenet of *fraternité*, by ensuring that Icarians shared in the important ritual of mealtime together rather than eating as individual families in isolated homes. However, while the refectory was ostensibly a paean to fraternity, as proclaimed by the texts painted on the walls, the ritual silence during meals did not do much to ensure a sense of common bonds among Icarians. All members were equally silent, but the enforced silence prevented the reinforcing of ties among Icarians that could have been fostered through open conversation.

The Icarians' prolific construction on Temple Square did not completely replace or efface the importance of the temple. An 1853 sketch done by an unknown artist shows the most important Icarian buildings—the school and the refectory—but these are dwarfed by the still-standing ruins of the Mormon temple. The influence of the temple was powerful and lasting, not just in the Mormon imagination, but also on the landscape and narrative of Nauvoo. Reports on the city during its Icarian occupation continued to refer to the block where the Icarians had located their community as Temple Square. Cabet himself continued to call the main block "*carré du temple*" or temple square in

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[139] Rude, *Voyage en Icarie*, 153; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," 11; David C. Martin, "Nauvooiana Scrapbook," Box 2, Vol. 3, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

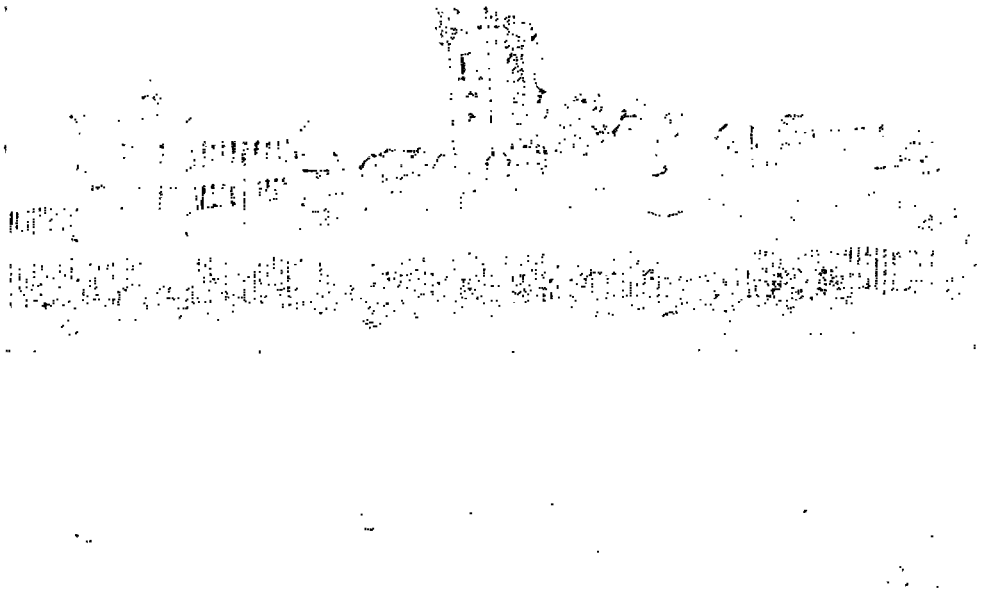

Figure 24 Sketch of Buildings on Temple Square: The School, The Mormon Temple, The Refectory. 1853. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

official Icarian documents, including an 1855 article written nine years after the departure of the Mormons, five years after what was left of the temple walls collapsed in a tornado,and subsequent to the dismantling of the temple and use of its stones in other buildings.[140] Cabet's remark is evidence of the seemingly indelible imprint of Mormonism not only on Nauvoo, but also on the national narrative and consciousness.

The provisional constructions of the Icarians ended up reinforcing the provisional nature of the community. The refectory, schoolhouse and other buildings met the immediate needs of the community and provided spaces for communal living, but they

[140] For example, see *Missouri Republican*, 3 December 1859, in *Journal History of the Church*; Cabet, "Opinion icarienne sur le mariage. Organisation icarienne, naturalization." In other places Cabet refers to "*le terrain du temple*" rather than the Icarian esplanade at the center of the block; see Cabet, "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 16 au 22 juin 1850," Papers, 1850-1851, Folder 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

did not carry the ideological weight necessary to define and sustain a viable community. The Mormon temple, on the other hand, united the disparate strands of Mormon experience in Nauvoo into a unified and coherent whole. The organizing space and doctrines of the temple provided a specific spatio-temporal framework extending beyond immediate space and time that ultimately characterized and cemented the Mormon people. In the chapters that follow, we will see the far-reaching effects of these important buildings to their respective communities and how they played an integral role in the eventual fates of the leaders, members and the city itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXTS AND PEOPLE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF UTOPIA

Louis Alphonse Bertrand, member of the people's committee in the revolution of 1848, editor of France's largest communist newspaper, and Mormon pioneer, is perhaps the most interesting common denominator to both the Mormons and Icarians. Bertrand was born in Provence in 1808 and educated in a Catholic school. At age 16 he joined a shipping company, traveling all over the world and returning only periodically to his native France. As both a sailor and a progressive thinker, Betrand was exposed to a wide variety of religious, political and social movements. He investigated Philippe Buchez's Christian socialism, Saint-Simonianism, and Fourierism before he finally encountered and joined the Icarian movement.[1] In his memoirs, Bertrand devotes little time to his conversion to Icarianism, the movement's attractions and why he chose Icarianism over the other utopian movements he had studied. From his memoir and other writings, it is evident that Bertrand was always attracted by utopian movements, but he showed a particular enthusiasm toward Cabet, whom he called "the Father and Supreme Pontiff of Communism." More than a run-of-the-mill Icarian, Bertrand possessed a native intelligence and wide experience that quickly led him to be an outstanding member of the Icarian movement and eventually editor of *Le Populaire* in Paris during Cabet's residence

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[1] For a brief history of Louis Bertrand, see Richard D. McClellan, "Not Your Average French Communist Mormon: A Short History of Louis A. Bertrand," *Mormon Historical Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 3-24.

in Illinois.[2] For several years, Bertrand was active in Icarianism and prolific in his articles in *Le Populaire*.

In October of 1850, *Le Populaire* included an article mentioning the recent visit of Mormons to the newspaper's Paris offices. These visiting Mormons were apostle John Taylor and his missionary companion Curtis E. Bolton, who first visited the Paris headquarters that summer.[3] The passing mention of Mormon missionaries in October 1850 downplays the importance of this visit for the paper's editor. Bertrand immediately recognized an affinity with the Mormon missionaries based on his own utopian hopes, but recognized in Mormonism the additional weight of religion and revelation that he found lacking in Icarianism. After "three months of study and serious reflection," Bertrand was baptized by John Taylor on 1 December 1850. He continued as editor of *Le Populaire* for another year, when Cabet returned to France and in an outrage fired the Icarian editor-turned-Mormon. Bertrand arrived at the Mormon missionaries' home with tears in his eyes, but was apparently concerned about supporting himself and his family rather than distraught at Cabet's angry rejection. Following his termination as editor of *Le Populaire*, Bertrand spent nearly two years translating the Book of Mormon into French.[4] In 1855, Bertrand immigrated to Utah to join the body of the church. He returned to France in 1859 as president of the Paris mission and preached Mormonism there until Louis Napoleon legislated against it in 1861. Bertrand returned to Utah and remained an active Mormon until his death in 1875.

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[2] Christian Euvrard, *Louis August Bertrand (1808-1875), Journaliste Socialiste et Pionnier Mormon* (Paris: Impri'Ouest-Le Mans, 2005), 12-13. The first article in *Le Populaire* with the initials L.A.B. appeared in the 20 May 1849 issue.

[3] William Howells, the first Mormon missionary in France, arrived on 9 July 1849. Euvrard, 104.

[4] L.A. Bertrand, *Mémoires d'un Mormon* (Paris: Dentu, 1862), 7. McClellan, 10; Euvrard, 172.

Louis Bertrand's shifting allegiance as well as the devotion or disaffection of thousands of other people involved in the utopian enterprises of Mormonism and Icarianism are best understood in terms of basic commitment mechanisms, important elements common to nearly all utopian communities. These commitment mechanisms determined the nature and stability of the community and defined the relationship of the individual member to the larger community. In her study of utopian communities, Rosabeth Moss Kanter identified these commitment mechanisms as the key to their success. They serve to hold communities together as a group and distinguish members from outsiders, creating invisible but important boundaries by which communities define, protect and sustain themselves.[5]

Both Joseph Smith and Étienne Cabet recognized that the success and longevity of a community depended largely on the devotion of its individual members as established from their first contact with the community and its doctrines and as reinforced through ongoing personal experience. Although the two communities in question were very different, the conversion process and rhetoric for both are surprisingly similar. Icarians and Mormons shared several elements aimed at increasing individual commitment and group loyalty. Both appealed to the emotional and rational sides of members in their conversion and retention efforts, and both Mormons and Icarians attempted to endow conversion with social and spiritual overtones to ensure the loyalty of members. However, Louis Bertrand's experience is understood only in comparing the different commitment mechanisms unique to each community, which had important implications in their communal courses and eventual fates.

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[5] Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 101.

Conversion

The primary element in creating and fostering commitment and a sense of community is the conversion process. Both groups had a sort of proselytizing or propaganda program that included a mixture of social, intellectual, spiritual and emotional appeals to advertise their specific brand of utopian salvation and to attract converts. Mormonism was an organized religion whose nature and appeal was primarily spiritual, but it also included important social and material elements. In contrast, Icarianism's appeal to its members was primarily as a social and economic system, but it also included significant Christian rhetoric that resonated with French Icarians.

Icarianism promised its followers social rather than spiritual salvation. Those who joined the movement, especially men, were drawn by the ideas of fraternity and equality as pictured in *Voyage en Icarie* and as outlined in Cabet's numerous other works. For many, Icarianism offered an escape, pure and simple, from the harsh realities of their lives. As Robert Sutton asserts, and as Icarian census records prove, most Icarians were members of the working class of France whose lives and livelihoods were being threatened by the social and political changes in France. Wages in Cabet's France ranged from approximately eighteen cents a day for common laborers to eighty cents a day for the most skilled mechanics.[6] As wages decreased as a result of industrialization, prices increased. Meat cost from twelve to eighteen cents a pound; bread from three to five cents a pound.[7] Rents were increasing; industrialization and machines were displacing

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[6] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," ii; Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 249; Vallet, 58; W.J.A.B. "The Icarian Community" *Christian Examiner* 53 (November 1852): 377.
[7] Vallet, 58; Cabet, *Almanach Icarien*, 156-157; Francis and Gontier, 196.

artisans and family industry. Cabet wrote of current conditions in an issue of *Le Populaire*: "Work diminishes and unemployment increases, salary declines and the price of rents, etc., are raised. All careers are obstructed; the struggle extends its ravages: families multiply and solid firms collapse; bread is lacking for the lowest classes; misery is general; suicides are seen every day; the future is uncertain and dreadful, in great disarray. That is the evil."[8] Here Cabet identifies the key difference between Icarians and Mormons. Both were seeking to flee an evil world and establish an ideal one in its place, but each group had a different view of the evils plaguing society. For Mormons the evils were moral; for Icarians the evils were social, threatening people's very survival.

Cabet's female followers, known as *Icariennes*, also joined the movement for specific social reasons, but theirs were usually different from men's. In her study of women and Icarianism, Diano Garno asserts that women were drawn to Icarianism because of the vision of a secure family society and because of promises of equality in education and marriage and in other opportunities.[9] Women workers in France earned even less than the most unskilled of their male counterparts, only four to twelve cents a day. For women whose salary could barely cover the cost of bread, the promise of a society of equals working together and providing for all was an attractive one. Women were also attracted by the opportunities that would be offered their children; no child labor existed in Icaria except in the schools where all children were equally educated and where they learned skills that would perfect their natures and help them contribute to the community. Education was not a viable option for many French Icarian families before

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[8] Gundy Collection, Box 3, Folder 25, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[9] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," ii.

they joined the communities. Although an 1816 decree provided that there should be a school in every community offering free education to those whose parents could not pay, the reality was that only half of French communities had schools, and many poor children never received an education.[10]

Mormonism served as a different answer to many of the same social stresses experienced by Icarian converts. In spite of their religious focus, the Mormon converts' reasons for joining the movement were not solely spiritual, and many converts to Mormonism saw Mormon doctrine and social practices as a source of relief from the social stresses of Jacksonian America. Apart from the ideological appeal of a city of God, the material reality of the city of Zion that Mormon preachers promised resonated with their listeners. There they could find peace, prosperity, employment and land. Zion was a city of Saints who believed in equality, avoiding disparities of wealth and poverty by holding all things in common. Mormonism created opportunities for belonging and for upward mobility and power, ideas that were often beyond the grasp of working class citizens of the United States and Great Britain.[11]

Social reasons, however attractive, were often secondary to the religious resonance that converts found within the church. First and foremost, Mormon missionaries promised truth and salvation. Theirs was a religious system founded on revelation received by Joseph Smith in which God himself had declared the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the "only true and living church upon the face of the

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[10] Lillian Snyder, "Socialization and Education of Children," 3.

[11] Newell G. Bringhurst and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds. *Excavating Mormon Pasts: The New Historiography of the Last Half Century* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2004), 27; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 40.

earth."[12] For many Mormon converts their conversion was a quest for salvation. Mormonism demonstrated unequivocally the immanence of God and the possibility of human communication with God. Mormon converts believed that God was not a vague force but an active presence in the lives of even the most ordinary people. Joseph Smith's narrative of his visions, the early events of the church and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon all helped Mormon converts feel in touch with divinity both personally and through the prophet and church institutions.[13] Mormon beliefs also involved a collapse of sacred space. The experiences and teachings of Smith radically altered the notion of a powerful but distant God, replacing it with that of an intimate, proximate God closely concerned with the fate of his church and the lives of individuals. The ongoing revelations given through Joseph Smith, as well as other events deemed miraculous, such as healings and speaking in tongues, continued to reinforce the Saints' sense of divine intervention and bolster their commitment to the community. For believers these events offered tangible evidence of the same divine power that had been practiced in the primitive Christian church.[14]

In addition to access to divinity, Mormons were seeking divine authority. In claiming authority directly from God through heavenly visitations from people such as John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John, Joseph Smith presented a radical claim to authority that attracted and motivated those seeking a restoration of the apostolic church of the New Testament. Joseph Smith's and Mormonisms' claim to divine authority was

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[12] The Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.
[13] Timothy L. Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 3-21; Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 33; Claudia Lauper Bushman and Richard Lyman Bushman, *Building the Kingdom: A History of Mormons in America* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 6.
[14] Alan Taylor, "The Free Seekers: Religious Culture in Upstate New York, 1790-1835," *Journal of Mormon History* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 64.

what convinced Oran Brownson of the truth of the movement, as he expressed in a letter to his brother Orestes: "You inform me you and your family are Catholics. The reason assigned I understand to be because no other church possessed proper authority. I have changed my opinions for the same reason because I consider the proper authority rests among the Mormons."[15] The presence of a prophet and twelve apostles as outlined in the New Testament convinced free seekers that the church was what it claimed to be—the restoration of Christ's primitive church in the latter days.

Like the Mormons, Icarians' attractions to Cabet's movement were motivated by reasons other than the purely social and political. Interestingly, for a movement that rejected Catholicism and practiced no formal religion, many of its adherents were drawn to its religious rhetoric and moral message. Cabet's 1846 work, *Vrai Christianisme*, second in importance and influence only to *Voyage en Icarie*, was the main vehicle of Cabet's moral message and sectarian leanings. *Vrai Christianisme* is a six-hundred page treatise equating Christianity and Communism. In it Cabet retells Biblical history, emphasizing communal and fraternal passages, including Moses and the children of Israel and the life and teachings of Jesus and his apostles. He ignores or overlooks Jesus' miracles and focuses on Jesus as a great teacher and philosopher rather than a divine being. He also traces equality, fraternity and community through the early Church fathers and celebrated popes up to Gregory the Great. In his text Cabet appropriates and redefines basic Christian tenets: true Christian worship is not "idolatrous and sterile"

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[15] De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority," 68; Steven T. Katz, ed. *Mysticism and Sacred Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 24-25; Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1988), 90; Bringhurst and Anderson, 37; Arrington and Bitton, 39; Matthew J. Grow, "'I Consider the Proper Authority Rests Among the Mormons': Oran Brownson to Orestes Brownson on Oran's Conversion to Mormonism," *Mormon Historical Studies* 4 , no. 2 (Fall 2003): 196. See also Wandle Mace's account of his conversion, Wandle Mace, Autobiography, 12-13.

practices, including "sacrifices, temples, images, priests, ceremonies and superstitious practices," but to love God and one's fellow men; the end of the world, the final judgment, and heaven and hell are metaphors to encourage good actions; the Kingdom of God is nothing more than the perfected practice of community, or another version of Icaria; and the millennium is the earthly realization of a "terrestrial paradise" in the form of the community. This all leads up to Cabet's final triumphant declaration: "CHRISTIANITY, for the Apostles, for the first Christians, for the Fathers of the Church, is COMMUNISM. . . .Yes, JESUS CHRIST is COMMUNIST! . . . And reciprocally, COMMUNISM is nothing other than the true CHRISTIANITY."[16] In *Vrai Christianisme* Cabet appropriates Christianity, strips it of its other-worldliness and turns it into a social movement. Christopher Johnson, in his study of Icarianism in France, claims that Cabet's Christian-communist link as established in *Vrai Christianisme* and developed in Cabet's other writings was responsible for the adherence of nearly all of Cabet's bourgeois followers. Cabet's Christian-communist connection filled the gap left by the decline of religion in post-Revolutionary France and was tremendously successful in garnering Icarian adherents. Johnson sees *Vrai Christianisme* as part of a trend toward sectarianism in France and links it directly with the impetus to emigration. A year after its appearance, Cabet called for the formation of an actual community in America. *Vrai Christianisme*, not *Voyage en Icarie*, tapped into the "working-class religious enthusiasm" that made emigration and the foundation of a community possible.[17]

Charles Chameroy, a sort of traveling Icarian missionary, reveals how Icarianism resonated with French Christians: "Today when the Catholic faith is nearly extinct, the

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[16] Étienne Cabet, *Le Vrai Christianisme*, 296, 363, 217-218, 619-620, 627-629,.
[17] Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 259.

heart of the man who needs belief will find in communism the way to fulfill his soul; instead of an imaginary celestial paradise, he will find a probable terrestrial paradise."[18] Cabet received (and printed) many letters extolling his Christian-communist connection and urging him to make Christianity the core of his doctrine. Letters to Cabet referred to him as "a new Moses," a "prophet," and "high priest of the communist church."[19] When accused of being a "false prophet," Cabet protested, "I have never had any pretension of passing myself off for a prophet." Christopher Johnson admits that Cabet did not "consciously try to build a sect," but he did employ religious rhetoric in an attempt to encourage a strong devotion to Icarianism, and when his "most devoted followers began to view him as a kind of prophet, he allowed himself to be swept away by the tide, ultimately choosing to create a communist New Jerusalem across the seas."[20]

Personal histories and journals reveal much about the why's and how's of both Mormon and Icarian conversion. The accounts of converts to both camps reveal a remarkable similarity in their emphasis on both spiritual/emotional conviction and empirical assurance that theirs was the right way. Mormon theology mixed the supernaturalism of miracles and visions with an internal consistency and modern rationalism. Joseph Smith and the missionaries he sent out to spread the message of Mormonism combined appeals to reason and self-interest with emotional appeals, thus

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[18] Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 40-41; Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 100, 174; *Le Populaire*, 3 July 1842.

[19] Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 232; Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 158; Cabet, "Progrès de la Colonie Icarienne," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 July 1854; Cabet, "Célébration a Nauvoo du 7e anniversaire," 46; Jacques Bonhomme, *Cabet, Pacha d'Icarie* (Paris: Schneider, 1848), 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica" <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>> 10 July 2007.

[20] *Le Populaire*, 19 Aug 1843; Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 207-208, 215; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 266, footnote.

satisfying both the intellectual and spiritual yearnings of their listeners.[21] John Greene, writing from his mission in Canada, reveals how missionaries presented a message that was a blend of revelation and reason:

> I . . . showed the gospel as it was in the beginning: also in the days of the apostles, and in the present day: being careful to compare the Jews' religion with the apostles', and also the religion of the many sects of this day with the Corinthian and Ephesian churches; and then giving them the testimony of the *New* and *Everlasting Covenant*, as established in these last days: being confirmed by many infallible proofs, both human and divine–the Lord himself speaking from the heavens unto men who were now living! [22]

John Greene's approach of methodical comparison of religious tradition bolstered by scripture was a common one among Mormon missionaries, but for missionaries and converts alike, God's voice and divine witness offered necessary and ultimate evidence of the truth of the message. The missionaries' dual approach to the message was mirrored by their listeners. The conversion experiences of numerous converts reveal an approach to the new message of Mormonism that was both analytical and emotional and that rested largely upon the Book of Mormon. Mormon conversion accounts seem to follow a pattern in which converts depict themselves as independent seekers after truth. Many recall having asked the same questions asked by Joseph Smith in his experience preceding the First Vision—which of all the churches was the true church of God, and how could one know the truth; they also note their disappointing contacts with other faiths as well as sustained personal efforts to find the truth through prayer and Bible

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[21] Wood, 384-5; Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 41; Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (New York: Harper and Row, 1950), 145; Steven C. Harper, "Infallible Proofs, Both Human and Divine: The Persuasiveness of Mormonism for Early Converts," *Religion and American Culture* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 103.

[22] John P. Greene to Oliver Cowdery, *Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland, Ohio), October 1834, 7-8; Harper, 106.

study. Finally they recount their initial exposure to Mormonism, which is generally followed by careful study, personal confirmation through the Holy Ghost, and finally great rejoicing in their newfound conviction.[23]

Sidney Rigdon, a Campbellite preacher and later member of the First Presidency, the top governing body of the Mormon church, joined Mormonism after two weeks of "much prayer and meditation." Louis Bertrand, former Icarian become Mormon, "accepted baptism after three months of study and serious reflection." Brigham Young devoted two years to studying Mormonism and the Book of Mormon before joining the church. Many took the approach of Joel Johnson who decided to take his Bible, "attend all their meetings and investigate the subject thoroughly with prayer for divine direction." He was convinced of the truth of the message when he saw that the principles taught in the Book of Mormon "corresponded with the Bible and doctrine of the church was the same that was taught by Christ and his apostles with signs following the believer." He writes that after having formed this conviction, "I concluded that the work was of God and embraced with all my heart and soul, and was baptized on the first day of June 1831."[24] Concurrence with both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament was an important consideration for many members and established their conviction in the truth of the Book of Mormon and in the church that had grown out of it.

However, study and intellectual conviction were almost never the sole evidence of the truth of the Mormon message; scripture study was almost always accompanied by

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[23] Leonard, 232; Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of the Relief Society* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and BYU Press, 1992), 5.

[24] Shipps, *Mormonism*, 28; Bertrand, 7; Joel Johnson, Excerpts from Autobiography (1802-1868), 3-4, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Harper, 105.

prayer and was often answered with a divine manifestation. For example, John Lowe Butler wrote that,

> I went to hear all and said but little, read the Scriptures and prayed most ardently to know the right way. . . . My whole mental powers seemed to be drawn out to God to know the truth, and the true order of his Kingdom, and if I could only know that, I would do anything even to the laying down of my life if necessary. While in the exercise of mind there was a voice spoke to me saying stand still and see the salvation of God and that will be truth. That instant a light shone round me. I was filled with the Spirit of the Lord.[25]

Individual experiences varied, but they often included a strong spiritual manifestation that believers recognized as a personal revelation. As Zina Diantha Huntington picked up the Book of Mormon she felt the "influence of the Holy Spirit" and pressed the book to her, repeating, "This is the truth, truth, truth!"[26] She received this divine manifestation of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon before she had even opened the book and read a single word. Many Mormon converts experienced a miraculous, very intimate manifestation that they believe came from God in answer to their personal needs; this became the bedrock of their belief and reaffirmed their conviction and commitment in times of trial.

Icarian narratives were often phrased in much the same language as Mormon religious conversions, showing just how much the religious aspects of Cabet's system appealed to his followers. Members who accepted Cabet's system and joined his movement often expressed this event in terms of conversion, and Cabet himself used the

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[25] John Lowe Butler, Autobiography, 6, typescript, Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[26] Ibid., 6; Zina D. Young, "How I Gained My Testimony of the Truth," *Young Woman's Journal* 4 no. 7 (April 1893): 318, Harold B. Lee Library, "Mormon Publications: 19th and 20th Centuries," << http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/YWJ& CISOPTR=11319&REC=7>>, 12 January 2009; Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, 7.

same term. A letter from a "savant professor" declares: "Religiously and morally, philosophically and politically, and socially, I've been Communist for twenty years without realizing it. One of your precious writings providentially fell into my hands like a divine revelation, and then there was light. It pierced my soul and restored it."[27] A comparison here with John Lowe Butler's account of his conversion to Mormonism is striking. Both refer to divine revelation and to light, religious tropes commonly used in narratives of spiritual conversion. The professor's emphasis on his soul is also interesting; in a system based on reason, many Icarian believers found that Cabet's writing affected their soul and emotions more than their minds. Letters from Icarians reprinted by Cabet reveal emotional rather than rational responses to his social system. More than one person wrote of "shedding tears of pleasure" and "crying for joy" in reading Cabet's various works.[28] Most of these emotive expressions came from women, but both men and women showed a surprising proclivity for emotional responses. However, these responses fall short of the divine manifestation Mormons believed they received as part of their conversion. Butler's account is a straightforward description of a light and a voice, which he clearly believed came from a divine source. The light spoken of by the Icarian professor is more metaphorical; his exposure to Icarian doctrines was "*like* a divine revelation" rather than an actual communication from a divine source.

The prevalence of emotional reactions does not overshadow the importance of texts, reading and reason in Cabet's system. Icarian adherents wrote of "reading over and

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[27] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 564; Étienne Cabet, "Petits dialogues populaires sur la communauté. Premier dialogue: Ne tourmentez pas pour convertir; 24 juin 1842" (Paris: Impr. de A. Breton, 1842), 1, Bibliothèque nationale de France; Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 5eme livraison, 214, 219.
[28] *Cooperative Communities: Plans and Descriptions: Eleven Pamphlets, 1825-1847* in series British Labor Struggles: Contemporary Pamphlets, 1727-1850 (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 4, J.F.C. Harrison Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Garno. "Gendered Utopia," 218.

over" and "examining" Cabet's writings. Many of them approached the key texts as they would the Bible, and as Mormon converts did the Book of Mormon, intently studying the books and often rereading them. The most influential texts mentioned in letters to Cabet were *Voyage en Icarie* and *Vrai Christianisme*. Some Icarians joined Cabet after a serious intellectual effort in which they compared several systems, carefully reading and discussing the works of the various movements.[29] Cabet extols this reasoned approach in a letter to "M. Julien, a Disciple, in France," published in the *New York Herald*. In the letter Cabet praises Julien because his "conviction is as solid as calm, reflective and enlightened." In one of his tracts, Cabet creates an imaginary conversation between an Icarian and a critic in order to outline Cabet's conception of an ideal conversion. The Icarian tells the critic the best thing he can to is to "read the writings that explain in detail the organization of the community," and then goes on to state, "I'm reading [*Voyage en Icarie*] for the sixth time because it both instructs and pleases me."[30] While Cabet was apparently pleased at the enthusiastic emotional responses to Icarianism, he emphasized the rational approach, believing that it was more conducive to lasting commitment.

Initial interest and conviction was only the first step. Perhaps the most important commitment mechanism shared by both groups was a formal contract and ritual that connected individual members to the group and that served as a means of ensuring individual commitment and loyalty. The Icarian commitment was formalized by the acceptance of a "Social Contract" outlining the numerous requirements for Icarian

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[29] *Cooperative Communities*, 4; Cabet, "Petits dialogues populaires," 1; Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 171, 206.

[30] *The New York Herald*, 29 July 1854, David Martin Collection; Cabet, "Petits dialogues populaires," 3.

members. These conditions of admission required that every initiate demonstrate an adequate knowledge of Cabet's numerous publications, accept without reservation the principles of Equality, Liberty, and Unity, renounce all individual property, recognize Cabet's absolute authority, and surrender all belongings to the *Gérance*. The ceremony preceding the departure of the *avant garde*, or advance party, in February 1848 included a ritualized acceptance of these conditions: Cabet asked, "Are you loyal adherents without reservation to the *Social Contract*?" "Yes!" "Are you sincerely devoted to the cause of Communism?" "Yes!" "Are you willing to endure hardship for the benefit of humanity?" "Of course!"[31] The same commitment was required of every member admitted to the community.

The Social Contract required, as Jules Prudhommeaux points out, "the blind faith of the monk or nun who pronounced eternal vows. But the convent, through its long history and riches, is in a position to assure those who take refuge there a material life free from worry. Living in Icaria, on the other hand, meant becoming involved in a hazardous experiment, far from civilization, in conflict with society and nature, and without the support of religious mysticism and other-worldly hope."[32] Cabet's system required the same level of commitment as religious communities, but offered none of the eternal rewards. Cabet tried to remedy this problem by including religious rhetoric aimed at this-worldly ends, hoping to capitalize on the increased commitment and loyalty to religious communities. Conversion to Icarianism in some instances was termed a baptism, implying a religious commitment with divine sanction. In an ode to Icarianism, one Icarian adherent wrote that in joining the community members of all nations would

[31] Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 49-50, 84.
[32] Prudhommeaux, 290-291.

"receive the immortal baptism of regeneration."[33] Cabet and the Icarians adopted religious language that would have resonated with people from Catholic France, but they used it to describe things temporal and social rather than eternal and spiritual.

Cabet also couched the commitment implied in the social contract in terms of marriage. Admission to the community, he claimed was "a sort of marriage. One day we will make of it a solemnity. For now, it is a contract of Society, a sort of adoption."[34] In couching admission to the community in terms of marriage, considered to be a holy and indissoluble union, Cabet tried to imbue admission with extra weight and gravity to increase members' commitment to the community and to reinforce his own patriarchal authority. Such rhetoric also served to turn the Icarian community into a sort of family with the same relationships and responsibilities as the patriarchal family. In the Icarian system, the community was a natural "extension of the family circle." Cabet was the "Papa," and the members were encouraged to view *la Communauté* as a "tender mother" who loved her children and deserved their gratitude and unfailing loyalty. Icarians also addressed each other as brother and sister, and a rhetoric of fraternity permeated their doctrines and infused their social practices.[35] This familial rhetoric was reinforced by the continued emphasis on family in Icarian social practices. Cabet encouraged conversion to Icarianism and immigration to America as families, and Icarianism largely became a family affair. For those who were single, marriage to another Icarian was an important

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[33] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 343; Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 3eme livraison, 131; *Le Populaire*, 5 September 1847.

[34] Cabet, *Almanach Icarien*, 213-214; *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 July 1854 and 23 August 1854.

[35] Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 172; *Popular Tribune*, 8 February 1851; Cabet, "Célébration a Nauvoo du 7e anniversaire," 28-29; Lillian M. Snyder, "Étienne Cabet was pioneer 'Women's Libber,'" *Nauvoo Independent*, 26 July 1972, Gundy Collection, Box 3, Folder 32, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; *Icarie* (Paris: Bureau du Populaire, [1849]), 5 L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

duty expected of all true Icarians, providing additional unifying bonds between member families.

Mormon Saints went through a ritual similar to the Icarians' formal acceptance of the Social Contract. Upon their arrival in Zion, the Saints participated in a ceremony consisting of formal questions asked by a community leader with verbal confirmation from the group. Sidney Rigdon asked the assembly: "Do you receive this land for the land of your inheritance, with thankful hearts, from the Lord? Do you pledge yourselves to keep the law of God on this land, which you never have kept in your own lands? Do you pledge yourselves to see that others of your brethren who shall come hither do keep the laws of God?" To these questions, they each answered, "We do," and then the land was dedicated for their gathering and inheritance.[36]

While similar to the Icarian ceremony, this event reveals several remarkable differences from Icarian commitments that are the basis for the difference in the nature and fates of the two communities. First, land was intimately connected to the idea of covenants and the Mormons' identity as a chosen, covenant people. The Mormons' arrival in Zion was accompanied by their entering into a covenant, which was in turn immediately followed by dedication of the land. The connection between covenant and land was not a new one, and the Mormons consciously appropriated the Abrahamic covenant in which Abraham's descendents were promised a land of inheritance in connection with their status as God's chosen people.[37] The connection to sacred history and ancient covenants served to make the land qualitatively different from other places

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[36] *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual*, 121; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles, 1946), 1:212-213.
[37] The Bible, King James Version, Genesis 17; 22:15-18.

and reinforced a sense of unique identity among the people who inhabited it. Second, the covenants made in Zion reveal that the commitments Mormons made involved God; people were not just promising certain things to their leaders and fellow community members but also to God. In the Mormon covenant relationship the individual first established a contractual or covenant relationship with God and then with other community members who had made the same personal commitment to God.

The covenant organization was the Mormon equivalent to the Icarians' Social Contract. Covenants functioned as the "central organizing principle" of Mormon theology and of Mormon cities, and they supplemented territoriality and economic cooperation to create and maintain a cohesive community.[38] Mormons in Nauvoo did not practice economic communalism as the Icarians did, or as the Mormons themselves had done earlier in Missouri. Instead they maintained individual households inhabited by families with independent wealth. Rather than relying mainly on economic ties to create bonds among community members, Mormons turned to a covenant organization. Covenants served to create and maintain a community in several ways. First, covenants defined the Saints individually as holy people and collectively as a sacred community.[39] The covenant organization was a framework by which Mormons conceptualized their relationship to God, to each other and to larger society. The covenant organization led to the conception of the Mormon community as a large family, similar to the Icarians' notion of a family community. Mormon doctrine and covenants taught that God was the father of all people, and hence, that all people were brothers and sisters in one great

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[38] Thomas G. Alexander, "'A New and Everlasting Covenant': An Approach to the Theology of Joseph Smith," in Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 43.
[39] Cooper, 148; Leonard, 199, 265.

family. Mormonism spread along family lines, as evidenced by its founding family, the Smiths. Following Joseph Smith's visions and founding of the church, his immediate family members were among the first to be baptized into the new church. The gospel later spread to extended family, and uncles, aunts and cousins soon joined. The family-based faith was typical, and many missionaries' first efforts were directed toward their immediate and extended families. This was also an extension and adaptation of the Abrahamic covenant, which extended salvation and covenant blessings along family lines, beginning with Abraham and stretching down though his descendents.

Covenants were entered into through ordinances, or rites and ceremonies believed to be essential to salvation, which related each separate believer to God and to the group as a whole. For example, baptism, the initiatory ordinance into the church, signified an individual's "personal acceptance of all the terms and conditions of the eternal gospel covenant."[40] Through baptism, the individual convert promised God to abide by the laws and requirements of the gospel. Additionally, through baptism, converts came into the fold of God and were called God's people; in other words, they became part of a community of believers linked by their common commitments and beliefs.[41] Other ordinances, such as temple endowments and sealings, promoted the same commitment of individual believers and sense of community. Such understandings and relationships facilitated the solidarity and continuity of Mormonism as a community. The Saints gathered regularly to participate in these ordinances and rituals that served to cement their identity as a holy nation and to reaffirm bonds of kinship, friendship and shared belief and experience. These same covenants and rituals also set them apart from

[40] McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 70.
[41] See Doctrine and Covenants 18:17-25 and The Book of Mormon, Mosiah 18:7-10.

Gentiles, or those outside the community, thus providing a psychic and spiritual boundary between Zion and the world.[42]

Second, covenants lent meaning and stability to the lived experience of the Saints in Nauvoo. The Mormon covenant organization countered the effects of a changing and complex society. The covenantal order was eternal, stretching back before the creation of the world and forward into eternity. It transcended and justified the difficulties and contingencies of life as part of a misunderstood religious minority on the American frontier and connected them with the ancient House of Israel who had also endured persecution. Furthermore, the covenant organization was able to incorporate and generate change within a context of continuity. For example, when Zion was abandoned in Missouri, the concept was redefined as the pure in heart, God's covenant people, a place and a state that could exist anywhere. This versatility allowed the Mormons to make sense of defeat and to face difficulties while maintaining the integrity of their community and sense of mission.[43] It also sanctioned the enterprise of building Nauvoo as a further step in God's sacred plan for his chosen people.

Finally, covenants ensured loyalty and adherence to Mormon leaders and the Mormon community because of their sacred nature. The Social Contract was an agreement between men, but in the Mormon system, covenants were sacred promises made between men and God. John Lowe Butler expressed this in his conversion narrative: he "covenanted with my Eternal Father to obey."[44] Believers who entered into the covenant promised to keep the commandments and laws of God, to sacrifice to build

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[42] Cooper, vii, 70, 78-79, 162; Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, 7; Leonard, 199.
[43] Cooper, 91, 102, 162.
[44] Butler, Autobiography, 8.

up the kingdom of God and to help others do the same. In return they were promised both spiritual and temporal blessings.[45] Covenants acted as an effective commitment mechanism because if one broke the covenant, one was not only offending leaders but might forfeit the blessings promised in this life and the next.

Post-conversion

Joining either movement was only the initial step in the creation and continuation of communities. After their conversion and commitment, both Mormons and Icarians faced tremendous obstacles, opposition and difficulties that tested the conviction of the most committed adherent. For Mormons, being baptized and forsaking the world for Nauvoo was not a guarantee that one would remain faithful to Mormonism. The early history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of suffering, sacrifice and, for many, falling away. Many lost their homes and possessions in the ongoing violence; family members died from exposure and violence, and unconverted family and friends exerted continual pressure, trying to convince their misguided loved ones to leave the church. And many did. During the Missouri era immediately preceding the founding of Nauvoo, many members, including approximately one-third of those in leadership positions, left the church for various reasons.[46] Mormon converts continued to come and go throughout the Nauvoo period and the ongoing history of the church. Mormons converts came by the thousands, and most stayed, bringing the Mormon population of the city and its environs to between twelve and fifteen thousand. Icarian converts trickled

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[45] The Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 31:17; *Church History in the Fulness of Times* 107.

[46] Prominent members who left the church or were excommunicated in 1837-1838 include Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, the Whitmer family, and half of the original Twelve Apostles. Terryl L. Givens, *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), 24.

into Nauvoo in a fairly steady stream, though not on the same scale as the Mormons. Christopher Johnson estimates the Icarian adherence in France prior to 1848 at ten thousand. But the revolution of 1848 quelled much of the enthusiasm. Those who remained true to Icarianism faced a voyage to a foreign country, harsh living conditions, financial difficulty and other disappointments. In Nauvoo under Icarian occupancy there was a constant influx and outflow of the population, but those who left generally did not come back, creating a constant drain on the resources and morale of the community. While an estimated eighteen hundred Icarians arrived in Nauvoo during its seven-year history, with constant withdrawals from the community, the population never exceeded 526 members, when it peaked in 1855.[47]

Conversion to the community, no matter how sincere, had to be continually bolstered and reinforced to ensure the loyalty of the individual member and the viability of the community as a whole. For Icarians and Mormons commitment and community were ensured through two primary means, one psychological and the other spatial. These two elements are not separate and distinct, but rather overlapping and mutually reinforcing. The first element common to both groups is sacrifice, one of Rosabeth Moss Kanter's primary commitment mechanisms. Conversion to a different system, whether social or religious, involved a psychic disruption for converts that included abandoning former beliefs, assumptions and practices for new doctrines, ideas and systems. In turn, many of the converts to both Mormonism and Icariansism were also abandoned or

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[47] Robert D. Bush, "Communism, Community, and Charisma: The Crisis in Icaria at Nauvoo," *The Old Northwest* 3, no. 4 (December 1977): 421, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 153; Vallet, 33; Jules Prudhommeaux, 292; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amerique*, 181; Ida Blum, *Nauvoo: An American Heritage* (Carthage, Illinois: Journal Printing Co., 1969), 26; Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 77; *History of Hancock County*, 415.

rejected by family and friends, who did not understand or agree with the converts' newfound convictions.

The act of conversion for the Latter-day Saint was also an act of withdrawal from gentile society that often required both emotional and financial sacrifice. John Lowe Butler realized he would lose his "good name" and what little property he had if he "joined these Mormons," but counted the sacrifice worth it. Orson Spencer sacrificed "home, friends, occupation, and popularity."[48] Priscilla Staines, a British convert, wrote of her trip to Nauvoo:

> I left the home of my birth to go to Nauvoo. . . . When I arrived at Liverpool and saw the ocean that would soon roll between me and all I loved, my heart almost failed me. But I had laid my idols all upon the altar. There was no turning back. I remembered the words of the Savior, 'He that leaveth not father and mother, brother and sister, for my sake, is not worthy of me,' and I believed his promise to those who forsook all for his sake; so I thus alone set out for the reward of everlasting life, trusting in God.[49]

For Priscilla and many others, the difficulty of leaving their homes and families and the severity of other sacrifices was at least mitigated by their assurance that they had found the truth and were fulfilling a commandment of God given to his prophet.

Icarian converts traveled a greater distance geographically and psychically than most Mormon coverts in Nauvoo. They left their native France as well as family, friends, homes and occupations to create their community in a strange land across an ocean. Some left family who were unconvinced or others who could not afford to come. Pierre Grillas, as a member of the advance guard, had to leave his wife and family behind, but he continued to write to them in France urging a serious study of Icarian principles in the

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[48] Butler, Autobiography, 8; John R. Young, *Memoirs of John R. Young, Utah Pioneer, 1847* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1920), 17; Colvin, *Nauvoo Temple*, 109-110.
[49] Fred E. Woods, *Gathering to Nauvoo* (American Fork, UT: Covenant, 2001), 41.

hopes that they would convert completely to Icarianism and join him in Nauvoo. Cabet himself also left his wife and daughter in Paris when he traveled to the United States.[50]

Icarians' financial sacrifices were also greater than those of most Mormons. Not only did they make great sacrifices to finance their voyage to Icaria, but becoming Icarian necessitated relinquishing everything they owned to the community. Private property no longer existed. Cabet expected members to give everything, even valuables and sentimental items, to the community. Absolute equality was strictly enforced in the community; if everyone was unable to have a clock, no one was allowed to have a clock, and those individuals who owned one gave it to the community. These material sacrifices required of Icarians would necessarily have increased members' likelihood of staying in the community. If members chose to leave the community they received only a fraction of their initial *apport*, making it difficult, if not impossible, to return to their lives in France or to start new lives in America.

The Mormon system of community was more complex than straightforward Icarian communism; the Mormon method was aimed at equalizing the standards of living while "preserving significant elements of individualism, including individual entrepreneurial responsibility, separate family dwellings, and to a considerable extent, the exercise of personal tastes and preferences."[51] While there was never a time when all Mormons lived under the regimen of an economic communal order, communalism was at the heart of Mormonism, and was an important part of the Nauvoo experience.

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[50] Grillas Letters in Grillas Papers, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Prudhommeaux, 395-396; Francis and Gontier, 223.
[51] Dean L. May, "One Heart and Mind: Communal Life and Values among the Mormons," in *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. Donald E. Pitzer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 139-140.

The Mormons began adopting a new economic system called the law of consecration as early as 1831 while still in Kirtland, Ohio. This economic system was instituted to answer the financial needs of the growing church. Revenue was needed for church undertakings such as the construction of the temple. The influx of converts and immigrants who were often poor and without financial means to support themselves necessitated the accumulation and supervised administration of money, goods, and property. While the law of consecration was not fully practiced in Nauvoo, this period "set permanently in Mormonism the communitarian vision and mode" and led to continuing communal experiments of varying success in Utah and other Mormon settlements in the West.[52]

Under the law of consecration members of the church were asked to deed all of their property to the bishop of the church who, in turn, granted an "inheritance" or stewardship to the individual from the properties received. The size of the stewardship depended on several factors–the size of the family, its circumstances, and the wants and needs as determined by the bishop and the prospective steward. The family entrusted with the stewardship then administered it to the best of their ability, operating under the conviction that they were only managing what belonged to God and his church and not their own private property. If they were industrious and successful, at the end of the year they would have a "surplus," a net gain. Any surplus above and beyond the needs and wants of the family was again to be turned over to the church to be administered by the bishop to those in need.[53] Those who were excommunicated or who left the church were allowed to maintain their "inheritance," but they relinquished any surplus that had been

[52] Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 90.
[53] The Doctrine and Covenants 42:32-33, 51:3, 42:34.

consecrated to the poor. Finally, in all other respects business relations were to be carried on in the usual manner under the "competitive, capitalistic system. Simplicity, frugality, cleanliness, industry and honesty [were] enjoined."[54] Idleness was not tolerated. Thus, in the Mormon system of consecration, private property was both in a sense eliminated and maintained. Property and possessions were not doled out equally among all members; rather, each individual and family was allotted a specific portion and became the sole steward for that portion. The law of consecration allowed for an individual to maintain his sense of independence and agency while it concomitantly weakened the conception of private property. This system fostered the belief that all ownership belonged to God and that they were at best stewards accountable to God for their actions and labor.

By the time they arrived in Nauvoo, Mormons no longer practiced the Law of Consecration. As the underlying economic principle of Zion, the Law of Consecration never really worked and was revoked after approximately two years. Poor members were eager to participate, hoping for a handout, but many were hesitant to contribute and consecrate their material goods to building the kingdom. In an address given in Salt Lake City Brigham Young explained why consecration failed:

> I found the people said they were willing to do about as they were counselled [sic], but, upon asking them about their surplus property, most of the men who owned land and cattle would say, "I have got so many hundred acres of land, and I have got so many boys, and I want each one of them to have eighty acres, therefore this is not surplus property." . . . Some were disposed to do right with their surplus property, and once in a while you would find a man who had a cow which he considered surplus, but generally she was of the class that would kick a person's hat off, or eyes out, or the wolves had eaten off her teats. You would once in a while

[54] Geddes, 31-32. See also Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 15-17.

> find a man who had a horse that he considered surplus, but at the same time he had the ringbone, was broken-winded, spavined in both legs, had the pole evil at one end of the neck and a fistula at the other, and both knees sprung.[55]

Such hesitations and half-hearted commitment ended in the failure of the Law of Consecration, and Joseph Smith eventually declared that God had revoked the law.[56] From the moment of Nauvoo's founding Joseph Smith explicitly counseled the Saints *not* to live the law, stating that, "The law of consecration could not be kept here, and that it was the will of the Lord that we should desist from trying to keep it" because, "it opens such a dreadful field for the avaricious, the indolent, and the corrupt hearted to prey upon the innocent and virtuous, and honest."[57]

While the Law of Consecration was not in effect in Nauvoo, members of the church continued to devote both land and labor to the benefit of the whole community. Church leaders in Nauvoo organized community projects destined to succor the poor and needy and to nurture equality and a sense of brotherhood among the Saints. For example, the church designated a field on the outskirts of Nauvoo as a community farm. In another attempt to foster unity and prosperity the city council established a sort of government works program to drain the swamps and to construct homes, businesses, and other buildings, thereby providing employment and a livelihood to residents of Nauvoo.[58] Many sacrificed to help those less fortunate who were arriving in Nauvoo, but the complete sacrifice of personal goods and money was not the absolute imperative for Mormons that it was for Icarians.

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[55] "Consecration," Discourse given by Brigham Young, 3 June 1855, *Journal of Discourses*, 2:306-307.
[56] The Doctrine and Covenants 105:34.
[57] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:93, 301. Joseph Smith from Liberty Jail, Missouri, March 1839, Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:301.
[58] *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 243-344; Leonard, 133, 155.

The sacrificial element involved in conversion to Icarianism and Mormonism merges with the spatial element. The ideological shifts and psychological sacrifices inherent in conversions to both movements were accompanied, in both cases, by geographic relocation. The location of the communities on the edge of what was then the United States necessitated removal and sacrifice for members of both groups. The sacrifice implicit in such voyages reflects Kanter's claim that sacrifice increases commitment.[59] The geographic dislocation associated with gathering to the relative wilderness of Nauvoo mitigated to a certain extent the psychological effects of conversion and sacrifice. The act of withdrawal from corrupt society (regardless of the perceived source of that corruption) created a new sense of self-consciousness and identity. It also contributed to the sense of community, belonging and contribution to that community. Involvement by physical removal reinforced the ideological conviction of the convert through social, geographic and financial bonds.[60] The success and longevity of both communities in the face of defeat, suffering and relocation rested upon the cohesion and identity derived from gathering to form homogeneous communities.

Mormon converts in Nauvoo initially came primarily from Canada and the eastern United States, particularly New England, and nearly all had to travel great distances to join their fellow Saints in Nauvoo. The Mormon practice of gathering to holy cities comprised a sifting process. In a call to gather in 1841, the authorities of the church urged all to come to Nauvoo to build up the city. But, they said, "Do not persuade any barren souls to come here–we want men of faith who can sacrifice their all for Christ's sake and

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[59] Arrington and Bitton, 23; Kanter, 76.
[60] Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 53; Arrington and Bitton, 41-42.

the Gospel's."[61] Thousands heeded this call and repeatedly abandoned homes and farms to gather to new cities. Beginning in 1841, vast numbers of people in the British Isles joined the church. Especially for converts from Great Britain, gathering was an expensive and daunting venture that required leaving home, jobs, family and friends, probably never to return. The call to gather to Nauvoo made explicit a dichotomy between those who were faithful believers and those who were lukewarm adherents. However, while gathering created a strong body of believers concentrated in one geographical location, it concomitantly marginalized those who were willing but unable to gather for whatever reason.

Icarians traveled the greater distance geographically to realize their ideal community. Most Icarians were French, and joining the Icarians involved an ocean voyage of some months and a journey of over four thousand miles. The financial cost and psychological difficulty discouraged many Icarians from making the attempt and functioned as a sort of sifting process, ensuring that only the most devoted and enthusiastic Icarians entered the community at Nauvoo. Even so, Cabet on several occasions lamented the absence of Icarian qualities and called for "true Icarians" to join them in Nauvoo. Cabet's increasing emphasis on continuing conversions and greater fidelity to the community was necessitated by the apparent half-hearted conversion of many early Icarians. The constant departure of disenchanted Icarians necessitated the inclusion of new members to bolster the fluctuating population of the community and to contribute to its always-inadequate finances. Converts were required to bring their own supplies and devote all of their material goods to the community. Many Icarians were

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[61] O'Dea, 165; *Millennial Star*, February 1841 and October 1841; Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 71.

willing to devote all they had to the Icarian cause, yet remained behind in France, unable to join their brothers because of the prohibitive cost of the journey and the required *apport* of six hundred francs (or approximately one hundred dollars).[62] They were still enabled to feel part of the community through local meetings and especially through the Icarian press. But the real Icaria was half a world away, and they were marginalized by their inability to join with the others in America. The distance traveled by the Icarians was reinforced by their foreignness in America; most Icarians were French and spoke no English on their arrival in the United States. However, their geographic dislocation and inability to speak English insulated the community to a large extent from potentially corrupting influences; it also defined them as a community distinct from those around them.

The geographic gathering that became central to Mormonism included a doctrinal and spiritual imperative that was lacking in Icarianism. From the inception of Mormonism, gathering was central to its doctrines and to its success as a church. The impulse to gather began with the move of the body of the church from New York to Ohio in 1831. From that moment on Mormonism included a constant impulse to gather together and form communities of believers rather than to spread out to diffuse their message. Only when they had joined the body of the Saints in their holy city could converts enjoy the blessings of the temple and be within direct reach of the prophet's voice. For the Saints the concept of gathering was both scriptural and spatial. The

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[62] Étienne Cabet, "Troisième Adresse du Citoyen Cabet aux Icarians," Étienne Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 214; Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 250; Sutton, "An American Elysium," 282; Sutton, *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Secular Communities*, 58.

Mormon emphasis on gathering collapsed not only geographic space but also temporal space as it extended back to the Old Testament and forward into the millennium. The Hebrew Bible contains the record of the scattering of the House of Israel as well as prophecies about its eventual gathering preceding the second advent of the Messiah. The Mormons literally saw themselves as latter-day members of the House of Israel who were being gathered in preparation for the millennium. Their constant expulsions and displacements were difficult and saturated with suffering, but they saw these events as part of a divine mandate to found and gather to Zion. For those convinced of the truth of Mormonism, gathering was a spiritual imperative, a divine command: "Yea, verily I say unto you again, the time has come when the voice of the Lord is unto you: Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Send for the elders of my church unto the nations which are afar off; unto the islands of the sea; send forth unto foreign lands; call upon all nations."[63]

The importance of gathering was more than solely spiritual. The spiritual imperative of fleeing wickedness and gathering to holy places was evidenced by a second, physical gathering that created a concentration and community of believers. Like Icaria, Mormon Nauvoo was dependent on the continued influx of new converts and financial resources for its survival and success. The costly construction of the temple depended on an influx of capital and laborers beyond those already at Nauvoo. Once they became members of the church, converts had a duty to promote the prosperity of Nauvoo

[63] The Doctrine and Covenants 133:7-8; Woods, 15; Leonard, 63-64.

in whatever ways they could.[64] If Nauvoo was the center of God's kingdom on earth, as the Saints believed, then as God's covenant people they were bound to build up and extend that kingdom. This meant that not only was the city itself sacred, but the efforts of the Saints to build it up were sacralized. The success of the church rested on more than financial contributions. Its stability and longevity depended on the adherence and support of its members, both for the church as an institution and for the leaders. Furthermore, the prophet's influence and authority were at least partly charismatic and were more effective when experienced personally, requiring the relocation of converts to the city of the prophet.

Gathering did not mean cutting all ties to former lives, family and friends. Conversion and continuing missionary efforts contributed to the centripetal nature of Mormonism. Mormon missionaries urged their adherents to make every effort to join the Saints in Nauvoo, for individuals' sake and for the sake of the church as a whole. Mormon converts, enthusiastic in their new faith and excited about the prospects of Nauvoo, often wrote letters to loved ones, encouraging them to study the Book of Mormon, to accept the truth and to join them in the city of the prophet. Many members returned to their homes as missionaries. The Mormon missionary system was thus an important element in strengthening the community and its individual members. Becoming a missionary was an opportunity for individuals to teach and testify, not only

[64] Olsen, 80; "Letter of the First Presidency to the Saints," 24 May 1841 in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:362; *Times and Seasons*, 1 June 1841; Leonard, 82; Flanders, 49; Barrett, 484.

attracting new converts, but reinforcing the missionaries' individual conviction and community to the Mormon faith and community.[65]

The constant ebb and flow of converts arriving and missionaries departing to bring in more of the elect contributed to a funnel effect in which Nauvoo became the center of an increasingly expansive vortex. The mission of Mormonism included constructing cities as refuges and as places of holiness. From these sanctified sites, Mormon missionaries would leave and convert people to gather back to the center to contribute to the building up of the kingdom from which more missionaries would leave. Joseph Smith affirmed that the covenanted people must gather together when he declared, "The Temple of the Lord is in process of erection here, where the Saints will come to worship to God of their fathers, according to the order of His house and the powers of the Holy Priesthood, and will be so constructed as to enable all the functions of the Priesthood to be duly exercised, and where the instructions from the Most High will be received, and from this place go forth to distant lands."[66] Richard Bushman asserts that this conception of space connected to the temple was one of the most powerful acts of Joseph Smith.[67] The creation of this vast spatial system of proselytizing and gathering governed the movement of thousands of people for decades, beginning with the Nauvoo period and continuing well into the Mormon's Utah years.

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[65] Samuel Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, was ordained an elder on 9 June 1830, two months after the church was organized, and almost immediately after departed on missions to neighboring areas. Individual members were called by Joseph Smith to serve missions at their own expense. After the organization of the Quorums of the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy in February 1835, these bodies were specifically designated as missionaries and they traveled throughout the United States, Canada and Great Britain. *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 75.

[66] "A Proclamation of the First Presidency of the Church to the Saints Scattered Abroad," January 1841, Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:269.

[67] Bushman, "Making Space for the Mormons," 5, 10; Bushman, "Joseph Smith and City Planning."

Nauvoo was not unique in its centripality or capacity to draw in many migrants. Bushman compares Nauvoo to Chicago, a city only slightly larger than Nauvoo in the mid-1840s. Just as Mormon converts converged on Nauvoo, people and their products came to Chicago from hundreds of miles. Both were dominated by a single institution: in the case of Nauvoo the church and temple dominated the landscape and lives of the city, while Chicago was dominated by trade and economics as represented by the Great Hall of the Board of Trade, one of the most important structures in the rapidly growing city. Bushman explains:

> The magnet for one was the market, for the other, the temple. Chicago's central principle was wealth, Nauvoo's spiritual empowerment. Chicago's work was to collect products, bring them to market, and exchange them for money to purchase manufactured goods coming from the east by ship and rail. Nauvoo's work was to collect converts, bring them to Nauvoo for instruction, fill them with divine intelligence, and prepare them for life in the City of Zion.[68]

Nauvoo was not without its economic impetus in funding a temple and in providing public works projects to support its members, but its *raison d'être* was ultimately spiritual and cosmic.

The importance and extent of the doctrine of gathering is illustrated in the Mormon doctrine of baptism for the dead, which extended the principle of gathering extended beyond temporal space and time into the eternities. During the Nauvoo period the Mormons first began practicing baptisms for the dead, a doctrine which taught that living members of the church could be baptized by proxy for their deceased ancestors in the temple. Combined with the sealing of families for eternity, the rituals of the temple brought together the long dead and those yet to be born, to live together in the afterlife.

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[68] Bushman, "Making Space for the Mormons," 20.

The Mormons were thus participating in gathering loved ones from beyond the grave to participate in a sacred, eternal community.

Sending members out to propagandize and bring new members back to the central community was not nearly as pronounced in Icarianism as it was in Mormonism. Early in Icaria's history, Cabet tried to institute a sort traveling missionary force, with one man, Chameroy (whom Cabet called his "Saint Paul"), moving from town to town, selling subscriptions to *Le Populaire* and Cabet's other works as well as preaching the Icarian system.[69] Cabet issued a call to "New Missionaries" to go out and "preach . . . Fraternity." In another tract he proclaimed, "When you are converted, you will want to participate in propaganda; you will spread Icaria," an injunction very similar to the Mormons' call: "Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor."[70] And Cabet's clearest call to spread Icarianism: "Come then, let us set to work, all of you, rich and poor, who have been converted to the community. Discuss, preach, convert, propagandize! Gather all the opinions, all the truths which make the conversion of others easier."[71]

Propaganda was an ongoing responsibility of Icarian adherents, but it was accomplished primarily through Cabet's writings. Cabet returned to France at one point to defend himself against accusations of fraud and embezzlement, and while he was there he proselytized for his system, but Icarian members tended to stay in Nauvoo rather than return home. Their immobility was due at least in part to their difficult financial

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[69] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 564; Sylvester A. Piotrowski, *Étienne Cabet and the Voyage en Icarie: A Study in the History of Social Thought* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1935), 62; Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 101.
[70] Cabet, *Almanach Icarien*, 163; Cabet, "Petits dialogues populaires," 3; *The Doctrine and Covenants* 88:81.
[71] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 654.

circumstances, which made regular voyages to France a near impossibility. Instead Cabet's printed works were the principal means of propaganda and conversion and were a primary focus for his energies as founder and leader of the community. Cabet wrote and published extensively while in Nauvoo, maintaining the *Bureau du Populaire* in Paris, which printed and distributed his works. The printed word was seemingly their best and almost only means of attracting new members. There were Icarian agents for their newspaper, *La Colonie Icarienne*, in New York, Cincinnati, New Albany, Dubuque, New Orleans, London, and Paris. Agents for their English newspaper, *The Nauvoo Tribune* were even more widespread. They were located in St. Louis, New Orleans, Kalamazoo (Michigan), New York, Philadelphia, California, Milwaukee, and even one in Utah Territory; there were also agents in London and Paris. The primary goal of the Icarian newspaper and its agents was "to make known the Colony and dispose the general opinion in its favor," in the process making converts who would devote themselves and all their belongings to the community.[72] Members' efforts at encouraging conversion were also largely restricted to the written word, urging family and friends to read Cabet's works. Many wrote letters back to France encouraging loved ones to consider Icarianism. One Nauvoo Icarian, Grillas, wrote to his wife who had remained in France, urging her to "reread *Voyage* and *Vrai Christianisme* and the works of our Papa Cabet, for without the reading of all the writings, it is hardly possible to become a good communist."[73] The ongoing efforts of Cabet and his followers to convince others of the superiority of Icaria yielded some fruit, as the continuing admissions of Icaria testify, but these conversions were in ever dwindling numbers and never kept up with the needs of Icaria in Illinois.

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[72] *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 July 1854; *Popular Tribune*, 19 July 1851; *Nauvoo Tribune*, 11 January 1854.
[73] Pierre Grillas, 11 avril 1849, Icaria, "Ma bien aimée épouse," Grillas Papers.

Mormons and Icarians shared many of the same commitment mechanisms as other contemporary utopian communities, including sacrifice, isolation, and geographic proximity. Neither Mormons nor Icarians found the perfect formula for converting and retaining members; both groups saw significant percentages of their membership leave the community. However, the Mormons were markedly more successful in retaining members than the Icarians. The Saints' solidity and longevity as a community ultimately rested on the intimate interrelatedness of every element, social, spatial and spiritual. Nauvoo was not merely an economic or political community; it was a religious community. While similar to the many other communities springing up at the time, Nauvoo was tangibly different. As Richard Bushman states, "Nauvoo existed for religious purposes. The city, its houses, its farms and shops, its families and neighborhoods all presumed a greater purpose. It was religion that bound the city's Latter-day Saint residents into a united community."[74] Presumably the Mormon inhabitants of Nauvoo were united by a common, personal experience with the divine that underwrote their conversion and their presence in Nauvoo.[75] This was reinforced by shared spiritual, spatial and social practices of private and public worship, by hearing the living prophet reveal the will of God, and by conforming their lives to the doctrines and practices of the church.

Several years after his conversion, Bertrand wrote his *Memoirs of a Mormon*, which credits his lasting conversion to the unique nature of Mormonism. Bertrand considers that Cabet's system and other utopian ventures were doomed to failure because they were built upon "the abyss of materialism." The success of Mormonism, on the other

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[74] Leonard, 200-201.
[75] Nelson, 261; Leonard, 206.

hand, he claims came from their unique foundation combining religious, civic and social elements. Bertrand goes on to assert that "direct revelation" was the cause of their success as "a religious, political and social entity, the strongest and most unified that has ever existed on this earth."[76] Both communities experienced and overcame enormous obstacles, but the Saints' common religious belief meant common objectives and practices that infused value into their social and economic programs and meaning into the challenges and contingencies that utopian communities seemed to always confront. At such times the Saints found strength in their belief that God had spoken to them personally through the Holy Ghost. Spiritual conversion was evidence that God was intimately involved in their lives, and they believed this divine interest and involvement would continue in spite of opposition, displacement and hardship.

[76] Bertrand, 242, 245, 310.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRUCTURES OF AUTHORITY

When Joseph Smith and the Saints arrived in Nauvoo in the spring of 1839, he located himself at the geographic center of the city in a graphic representation of his centrality and importance to the community spiritually and socially.[1] Smith was so central to the city that it became known to Mormons and non-Mormons alike as "the city of the Prophet." A year after Smith's death, the Saints officially changed the name of Nauvoo to the City of Joseph, making the city a memorial to Joseph Smith and a testimony to the influence and importance of their beloved prophet in building up the city of Nauvoo.[2]

For Joseph Smith, Nauvoo was only the latest in a series of cities which he had planned and platted, and it seemed natural for him to impose his vision on whatever landscape the Saints inhabited. For Smith, city planning was as natural as breathing and as American as apple pie, and he fell to city building with unwavering enthusiasm, time and time again. He took an American view of settling and expansion, thinking nothing of planning his own city and accommodating what would surely be rapid growth and expansion. Joseph Smith's role as city planner and developer locates him in long tradition

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[1] Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and James L. Kimball, Jr., "The First Relief Society: A Diversity of Women," *Ensign* (March 1979): 28; Richard W. Jackson, *Places of Worship: 150 Years of Latter-day Saints Architecture* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 2003), 25; Olsen, 234-235.

[2] A correspondent of the *Richmond Palladium* referred to Nauvoo as "the city of the Prophet," as did the Reverend Samuel A. Prior when he visited Nauvoo in 1843. *Richmond Palladium* quoted in *The Nauvoo Neighbor*, 2 May 1842; Samuel A Prior, "A Visit to Nauvoo," *Times and Seasons*, 15 May 1843; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:394.

of urban reformers stretching back to Thomas More and Plato. For Smith, the prophetic role was an inherently utopian role, as it included preparing the world for the coming of Christ, and in his mind creating the right kind of city was a necessary step to creating the right kind of world.[3] Nauvoo was thus more than a mere city; it was the physical realization of a spiritual vision, the fulfillment of prophecy and the earthly prototype of a celestial ideal. It was, literally, the city of a prophet.

Three years after the Mormons' departure, Étienne Cabet, the "prophet of communism," founded his own community in what had been the City of Joseph.[4] Unlike Joseph Smith, who replatted and renamed the city of Commerce, Étienne Cabet made only minor changes to Nauvoo, an important distinction between the two men. While Joseph Smith actively shaped a city, his Icarian successor had to be content to inherit it. Cabet's modifications to Nauvoo were modest. He was constrained in his community building because of his limited assets and the already established contours of the city. Cabet thus kept things in Nauvoo largely as they had been envisioned and constructed by the Mormons. Temple Square was the only space in the town that was profoundly altered by the French Icarians, and even those modifications were almost involuntary as they were started only after a tornado destroyed the remains of the temple. There were no real attempts, even on a limited scale, to realize the city and buildings that had been described in such detail in the pages of *Voyage en Icarie*.

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[3] Richard Bushman, "Joseph Smith and City Planning."
[4] *Le Populaire*, 19 August 1843; Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 215.

Two years after Icaria was established in Nauvoo, Cabet left for Paris to defend himself against charges of fraud and embezzlement brought by ex-Icarians in France.[5] As part of his defense, which reputedly brought the courtroom to tears, Cabet claimed Icaria as his city. He declared, "It was my reputation and my popularity that spread my doctrines so rapidly and that caused my project of emigration to be adopted so easily."[6] Icarianism was his brainchild, and the community at Nauvoo had been founded and sustained through his efforts. However, in spite of Cabet's claim of his centrality and importance to the Icarian movement, a mere six years later the Icarian community at Nauvoo rejected Cabet and cast him out of the very community that he had founded.

Why was Joseph Smith memorialized in Nauvoo when Étienne Cabet was expelled? Part of the answer to this question lies in the different constructions of space in Nauvoo and the systems of the authority that the city either sustained or resisted. As an essential element of all utopian communities, spatial constructions implicitly, and often directly, define and reinforce certain power relations. As Michel Foucault states, "space is fundamental in any exercise of power."[7] Doreen Massey agrees that "space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and cooperation."[8] The process of positioning and constructing a community is a powerful and a political act by which the leader

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[5] Cabet's accusers, led by Thorel, a member of the advance guard, claimed that he had used fraud in advertising an Icaria that did not exist and had stolen donations and personal property. He was initially found guilty, but was acquitted after he defended himself in person in 1851. See Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 69-70.

[6] Étienne Cabet, "Défense du cit. Cabet, accusé d'escroquerie devant le cour d'appel de Paris," (Nauvoo: 1 September 1850). Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, Folder 4, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[7] Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 252.

[8] Massey, 156.

appropriates, possesses and owns that space; he also defines and determines its nature and limits. However, once the city is created, it begins to exert an influence of its own and either reinforces or resists the authority of its original founder. Or, as Phillip E. Wegner asserts, "Space itself is both a *production*, shaped through a variety of social processes and human interventions, and a force that, in turn, influences, directs, and delimits possibilities of action."[9]

Nauvoo was the brainchild of two very different men who actively shaped and defined the community. However, Nauvoo soon took on a life of its own, shaping and defining its inhabitants. The siting and development of Nauvoo under both the Mormons and Icarians illustrate the different types of authority exercised by Smith and Cabet and the far-reaching implications of this authority. City building was central to each man's mission; both leaders were extremely invested in building the city of Nauvoo, and they both made tremendous financial and personal investments in the city. They defined Nauvoo, its character and its psychic boundaries just as much as its buildings and borders did.[10] Conversely, Nauvoo defined and determined the nature of each leader's authority within his respective community. As the city of Nauvoo rose from the banks of the Mississippi River, it came to represent, reinforce and resist certain notions of authority and power relations that shaped both the Mormon and Icarian communities.

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[9] Wegner, 11, emphasis in original; see also Chidester and Lenenthal, "Introduction," in *American Sacred Space*, 15.
[10] Hayden, 39.

Origins of Authority

Both Joseph Smith and Étienne Cabet were termed "prophets," but the nature of the authority they exercised within Nauvoo was very different. These differences are most clearly captured by Søren Kierkegaard's study, *Without Authority*, which examines the difference between religious and secular authority. Kierkegaard, a contemporary of Smith and Cabet, examines apostolic or prophetic authority by comparing it with genius. The genius, he says, is "what he is by himself, that is, what he is in himself." A genius is "born" and "belongs to the finite realm of the temporal." He is valued according to his content of his doctrine.[11] An apostle, or prophet, on the other hand, is what he is by divine authority. He is called and appointed by God and belongs to an infinite and eternal order, not the temporal realm. His identity and authority stem from divine appointment and are not dependent on the content of his doctrine. This authority cannot be demonstrated physically, and there is no evidence of it beyond his own statement. And for Kierkegaard, apostolic authority is black or white, all or nothing: either the prophet is called of God or he is not. There is no intermediate value or authority.[12]

Joseph Smith's identity and authority as a prophet rested squarely on his claim to his divine calling and sanction. Smith unapologetically declared that God had called him to restore his ancient church and to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. This claim is outlined in Joseph Smith's personal history, which he recorded in 1838. He wrote that during the "great excitement" of the Second Great Awakening in the Burned

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[11] Søren Kierkegaard, *Without Authority*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1997), 3-4, 95-96; John S. Tanner, "Of Men and Mantles: Kierkegaard on the Difference between and Genius and an Apostle," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 2, (2001): 154.
[12] Kierkegaard, 95-6, 105; Tanner, 155-156.

Over District, he attended the meetings of the various groups as often as he could, but was careful to "keep [himself] aloof from all these parties," maintaining a safe distance and engaging in his own "serious reflection."[13] The religious excitement and contests between the various denominations bewildered the fourteen-year-old boy. As he later recorded, "how to act I did not know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible." Yet it was a passage in the Bible that contained his answer. He "reflected again and again" on a passage in the Book of James that eventually led him to "ask of God."[14] According to his own account, Joseph Smith went into the woods near his home in Palmyra, New York on a spring morning in 1820 to ask God which church to join. He recorded that, "I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head . . . which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description standing above me in the air. One of them spake to me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him*!"[15] During this vision, Smith learned that he would restore the ancient Christian church in its purity.

Figure 25 Joseph Smith. Courtesy Western Illinois Univeristy Special Collections.

[13] "Joseph Smith—History," The Pearl of Great Price, 1:8.
[14] The Holy Bible, King James Version, James 1:5-6; "Joseph Smith—History," 1:12-13.
[15] "Joseph Smith—History," 1:16-17.

This event, which came to be known as the First Vision, was the basis of Joseph Smith's prophetic authority. This unique occurrence led to further revelations, the publication of the Book of Mormon, the establishment of a church, and the founding of Nauvoo and other Mormon communities, all of which served to buttress Smith's prophetic authority. His successor Brigham Young explained the significance of the First Vision to Smith's authority as prophet: "Who called Joseph Smith to be a Prophet? Did the people or God? God, and not the people called him. Had the people gathered together and appointed one of their number to be a prophet, he would have been accountable to the people; but inasmuch as he was called by God, and not the people, he is accountable to God only and the angel who committed the gospel to him, and not to any man on earth."[16] This reflects the view of most Saints, who believed that Smith was called of God and who willingly accepted his directives as revelation coming from God. His followers seemed to possess an almost mystical faith in both the sacred and secular leadership of the prophet and believed that following him was essential to both their temporal well-being and to their eternal salvation. So if the prophet wanted them to build a city in the swampy, mosquito-infested land of Nauvoo, it was God's will and he would bless them for it.

According to Kierkegaard, in contrast to the calling of an apostle, a genius is "born," that is, he has no supernatural or transcendent claim to authority, but rather traces that claim through a process of development and achievement. Étienne Cabet's claims to authority within his community were based on education and reason rather than

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[16] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:521.

revelation. Like Smith, as a young man Cabet sought evidence of divinity, but with very different results:

> "I was thirteen when a respectable curé . . . persuaded me that God always had his *eye open*, that he saw all, that one could do nothing without his support, that one obtained his aid by sincere evocation and prayer. . . . I seemed, always and everywhere, to see the eye of God, an *immense eye*, open and fixed on me. . . . I prayed to God with all the fervor of my soul, I begged him on my knees, I pleaded with joined hands to reveal the truth by some sign, by a wink of the eye, for example, promising him that I would devote the rest of my life to him. . . . I remember saying, 'Oh my God, almighty God, God infinitely good, show yourself once to the earth, as you showed yourself to Moses! Show yourself, speak from heaven, command!'" . . . .
> "And then?"
> "My *great eye* did not make the least wink; and I stopped believing, without the least discomfort of conscience."[17]

This occurrence is in stark contrast to Smith's experience with divinity at approximately the same age. While Smith's query was answered with a divine manifestation leading to the Book of Mormon, the formation of a church, and ongoing revelation, Cabet saw nothing, not even a divine wink, and consequently abandoned his religious beliefs with seemingly little regret.

Cabet turned to education and the mind as the foundation for his authority and as solutions to society's problems. In his written histories of his life and the genesis of Icarianism, Cabet presented himself as the consummate genius. From an early age he demonstrated a brilliant intellect, which he developed through formal and informal study and which he showcased in his voluminous writings. During a time when most of his

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[17] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 281-282. Eugène, a French character, tells this story in the novel, but it is part of Cabet's autobiography; see Prudhommeaux, 3.

countrymen received only a rudimentary education, Cabet went to law school. After practicing law for a few years, Cabet turned to politics. Convicted of sedition against King Louis Philippe in 1834 for inflammatory statements published in *Le Populaire*, Cabet was given the choice between two years in prison and exile. He chose to go to London for a five-year exile, during which time he reportedly devoted eighteen to twenty hours a day to reading and study.[18] In developing his Icarian agenda he read "more than a thousand volumes," including Thomas More, Fourier, Saint-Simon, "all the ancient and modern philosophers," the Bible, and all the Fathers of the Church.[19] Cabet then drew up his plan for Icarianism:

Figure 26 Étienne Cabet. Courtesy WIU Special Collections.

> So I took my pen to draw up a program, a plan, *like a mathematician* to solve a problem. I thought I had the *mission* to organize a great society on the basis of equality. . . . I consulted all the ancient and modern thinkers of all countries. I ran through their works (more than a thousand volumes). . . No one has ever made such an examination (devoting to it eighteen and often twenty hours a day in the quiet of exile), added to thirty-five years of former studies and some experience in political and social affairs.[20]

Cabet constantly emphasized his exhaustive and methodical study of social systems and philosophers, ancient and modern, as the basis for his community and the rationale for his

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[18] Cabet, *Comment je suis communiste et mon credo communiste* (Paris: Bourgogne et Martinet, 1840), 5, in *Le Communisme Icarien: de 1840 à 1847*; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, p.7.
[19] Cabet, "Défense du cit. Cabet"; Cabet, *Comment je suis communiste*, 5; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 7.
[20] Cabet, *Comment je suis communiste*, 3-4.

control of the community. Cabet's authority rested on his credentials, on the validity of his vision as outlined in *Voyage en Icarie* and other texts. His novel and other writings implicitly ground his authority in his superior education and understanding. Cognizant of the nature of his authority, Cabet was careful to explain the genesis of Icarianism, his qualifications and the nature of his authority as founded in study and reason. His methodical approach resulted in a community based on reason and the written text where education was celebrated as the ultimate good and the educated genius enthroned as the ultimate authority.

The nature and fates of the two communities at Nauvoo rested on events that occurred decades before the city's founding. Smith's account of the First Vision and subsequent miraculous events established in the mind of his followers his divine authority, which in turn ensured their acceptance of his direction in all matters, whether it involved pronouncing new doctrine or founding new cities. Cabet's rejection of religion and his emphasis on the "mathematical" origins of Icarianism led to criticism and a suspicion of inherent flaws in Cabet, in the community he created and in the very fabric of the Icarian system itself. This distinction between a divine calling and an educated superiority created crucial consequences for both the founding and fates of the two communities.

Locating Nauvoo

Nauvoo was neither group's first attempt at community building; instead it was more of a "Plan B" after earlier failures. The siting of Nauvoo was an important departure from both Smith's and Cabet's intentions and earlier practices, and for both groups its

selection was grounded more in economic and material expediency than from any deliberate design. Divine mandate had determined the location for previous Mormon settlements in Ohio and Missouri; Smith declared in revelation the site for the Mormon cities of Kirtland, Zion and Far West.[21] After the Mormons were forcibly evicted from the state of Missouri, Joseph Smith heard of the availability of vast tracts of land at reasonable terms in Illinois and Iowa. His initial response recorded in his journal on 11 June 1839 conveyed anything but the inspired certitude that had been evident in Missouri: "Commerce was so unhealthful, very few could live there; but believing that it might become a healthful place by the blessing of heaven to the Saints, and no more eligible place presenting itself, I considered it wisdom to make an attempt to build up a city."[22] The location for the Saints was a matter of discussion and concurrence instead of prophetic pronouncement as had been the case for all earlier Mormon settlements.[23]

However, the Saints' willingness to undertake the construction of another city and their success in the construction of Nauvoo rested firmly on revelation and the prophetic authority exercised by Joseph Smith. As the prophet and president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Smith was God's only spokesman on earth, the sole person authorized to reveal God's will to build and to hold the keys of the Kingdom of God. His calling as prophet also established him as a seer, or one who could collapse temporal space by seeing into both the past and the future. He clarified and interpreted events in the past and prophesied of things to come. But his authority was not limited to religious

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[21] The Doctrine and Covenants 37:3, 57:1, 3, 115:7. Moreover, the plats for the cities of Zion and Far West with commands to build temples were given by revelation as well. One drawing of the Plat of Zion includes this note: "For your satisfaction we inform you that the plot for the City and the size form and dimensions of the house were given us of the Lord." Quoted in Brown and Smith, 28, 38.

[22] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* 3:375.

[23] Olsen, 212-213.

realms. To his followers, Joseph Smith's power as prophet was comprehensive and his authority absolute. As a prophet he also was a moral critic of society, its practices and institutions. His responsibility included overseeing the creation of the Kingdom of God on earth, and that involved identifying the fatal flaws of societies and nations around him and then proposing and enacting inspired alternatives. Finally, as prophet he was an unquestioned leader of his people. Those who accepted the truth of his personal history and of the books he produced accepted his spiritual as well as his moral, social and political authority, and at his direction they started building yet another city.[24]

Like Joseph Smith, Étienne Cabet tried to capitalize on the absolute prophetic authority offered by a religious framework with the publication of *Vrai Christianisme* in 1846, in which he equated communism and Christianity in an attempt to deepen his adherents' faith in himself and his system.[25] *True Christianity* is a six-hundred page treatise equating Christianity and Communism. In it Cabet retells Biblical history, emphasizing communal and fraternal passages, including Moses and the children of Israel, the life and teachings of Jesus and his apostles. He ignores or overlooks Jesus' miracles and focuses on Jesus as a great teacher and philosopher rather than a divine being. He also traces equality, fraternity and community through the early Church fathers and celebrated popes up to Gregory the Great. In his text Cabet appropriates and redefines basic Christian tenets: true Christian worship is not "idolatrous and sterile" practices, including "sacrifices, temples, images, priests, ceremonies and superstitious practices," but to love God and one's fellow men; the end of the world, the final

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[24] Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 48-49.
[25] Christopher H. Johnson, "Communism and the Working Class before Marx: The Icarian Experience," *American Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1971): 684.

judgment, and heaven and hell are just metaphors to encourage good actions; the Kingdom of God is nothing more than the perfected practice of community, or another version of Icaria; and the millennium is the earthly realization of a "terrestrial paradise" in the form of the community. This all leads up to Cabet's final triumphant declaration: "CHRISTIANITY, for the Apostles, for the first Christians, for the Fathers of the Church, is COMMUNISM. . . .Yes, JESUS CHRIST is COMMUNIST! . . . And reciprocally, COMMUNISM is nothing other than the true CHRISTIANITY."[26] In *Vrai Christianisme* Cabet appropriates Christianity, strips it of its other-worldliness and turns it into a social movement. A year after its appearance Cabet called for the formation of an actual community in America. Christopher Johnson, in his study of Icarianism in France, sees *Vrai Christianisme* as part of a trend toward sectarianism in France and links it directly with the impetus to emigration. *Vrai Christianisme*, not *Voyage en Icarie*, tapped into the "working-class religious enthusiasm" that made emigration and the foundation of a community possible.[27]

True Christianity was key in cementing Cabet's authority and position as "prophet" of Icaria, a title that became increasingly common after the 1846 publication. But unlike Joseph Smith, whose role and authority were comprehensive and well-defined, Cabet's status as prophet of Icarianism was vague; Icarians used the title more as a way of expressing admiration for his system than describing any particular role or authority. Cabet asserted that he "never had any pretension of passing [himself] off for a prophet," but neither did he protest when admiring Icarians called him a "new Moses," "high-priest

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[26] Cabet, *Le Vrai Christianisme*, 217-218, 296, 363, 619-629.
[27] Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 259.

of the communist church," or "the second revelator . . . chosen by Providence."[28] However, an incidental inclusion of religious authority was not enough to establish any absolute authority, as is evidenced by subsequent events and members' constant complaints about everything from food, to housing, to Icarian education. Nor was it enough to ensure the viability of Cabet's vision or of the community itself.

Icarians were eager and accepting of Cabet's authority at first, judging from the numbers of the advance guard and the immense crowds seeing them off from France. From the inception of Icaria, Cabet mixed democracy and despotism in an unpredictable system of patriarchy, and his authority soon took a serious blow. The first location of Icaria, near Red River, Texas, had been the subject of study, speculation and many reports in Cabet's French newspaper, *Le Populaire*. Cabet asked for advice on the purchase from Robert Owen and traveled to London personally to meet with Owen and William Smalling Peters, the agent for the Texas land company. However, Cabet's grandiose plans failed in Texas. Money and supplies were scarce, the climate proved harsh, and many Icarians deserted or fell ill. The biggest setbacks came from the great distance to Icarian lands and the impossible requirement to construct buildings on each plot of land in order to claim it. The Icarians eventually backtracked to New Orleans to regroup and to reevaluate their course of action.

After the initial failure in Texas, Cabet called a meeting in New Orleans on 21 January 1849 to determine the fate of Icaria. Cabet declared that if a majority wanted to

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[28] Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*. 3eme livraison, 158; Jacques Bonhomme, 1, 6; Étienne Cabet, "Opinions et sentiments publiquement exprimés concernant le fondateur d'Icarie" (Paris: l'auteur, 1856), 17, Bibliothèque nationale de France. See also "Lettre de D . . . , Avocat, Icarien au Bureau de Paris," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 30 August 1854; "Toast par Mercadier," in Cabet, "Célébration à Nauvoo du 7e anniversaire," 46.

go home, he would support the decision; but if they wished to continue and establish Icaria elsewhere, he would devote himself to the cause. After putting the matter to a vote, two hundred people, or nearly half of those present, determined to abandon Cabet and his utopian schemes and return to France. Having given all their material wealth for the Texas experiment, the 219 "dissidents" wanted to have the collective Icarian assets liquidated and Cabet arrested for stealing. Finally, in a compromise, Cabet reluctantly refunded their contributions. A bare majority of 280 remained loyal to Cabet and determined to try again. When scouts returned with reports of Nauvoo, Cabet almost immediately decided to locate the community there. Like Smith's decision to locate at Nauvoo, Cabet's decision was driven by expediency: the price was relatively cheap, lands were already cleared, lodgings erected, and the Mississippi River offered easy access to their new home.[29] The remaining Icarians voted in support of Cabet's decision to relocate to Nauvoo. Upon arriving in Nauvoo, Cabet began to exhibit tyrannical tendencies. He determined to buy Temple Square and two contiguous blocks, but many of his followers disagreed. Icarian Émile Vallet spoke for many Icarians when he stated that they "would have preferred investing in land. They thought it was not practical, not wise to think of glory, of monuments when they had no certainty of having bread for their families."[30] Cabet dispelled the discontent through "many long discussions," but this dissatisfaction

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[29] Cabet, "Célébration du cinquième anniversaire du 3 février 1848" (Paris: l'auteur, 1855), 25, Bibliothèque nationale de France; *Icarie* (Paris: Bureau du Populaire, [1849]), 32, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; "Lettre de M. Cabet, dans le *Missouri Republican* 18 April 1849," in Étienne Cabet, *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 2*, 32.

[30] Vallet, 20.

with Cabet's seemingly arbitrary exercise of authority would continue to foment until it fractured the community a few years later.[31]

Blueprints of Community

Kierkegaard's second criterion in examining apostles and genius is the content of each man's doctrine. Among their vast writings both Étienne Cabet and Joseph Smith wrote and published one seminal work that underwrote their communal experiments and that became the defining document of their respective communities. The Book of Mormon and *Voyage en Icarie* were the textual foundations for the two communities at Nauvoo, but they operated in very different ways that are crucial to understanding both the men and the cities they created. As Terryl Givens claims, Smith's authority, while sustained by the Book of Mormon, was independent of its content.[32] In spite of its status as scripture, the Book of Mormon, in its implicit and explicit focus on revelation and prophetic authority, allowed for flexible application of utopian principles and upheld the prophet as divine interpreter of scripture and receiver of revelation. Cabet, on the other hand, was completely dependent on the content of his utopian doctrine for his authority within Icaria. Cabet's most important work, *Voyage en Icarie*, was a detailed blueprint for the ideal society, and it became the authoritative standard against with the community, and eventually Cabet himself, were measured and found wanting.

Mormonism's foundational text, the Book of Mormon, is a record of ancient inhabitants of the American continent, written in an ancient language and translated by

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[31] Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 76.
[32] Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myth, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), 88.

"the gift of God."[33] The primary civilization stemmed from a small group who left Jerusalem around 600 B.C., came to the Americas, and afterwards separated into two nations, one of which became the principle ancestors of the American Indians. The book outlines the groups' religious experiences–revelations, visions, teachings–and other experiences such as wars and political conflicts. The narrative culminates in the account of the visit of the resurrected Jesus Christ who teaches the people and establishes a church among them. The book concludes around 400 A.D. with the account of the wars between the two groups, which results in the destruction of the Nephite nation.

The Book of Mormon was foundational to Nauvoo, but not as a blueprint of community building. In fact, the Book of Mormon contains only a smattering of brief passages that could be considered utopian.[34] Rather, the Book of Mormon was tangible evidence that validated Smith's prophetic role and authority and, which, in turn, underwrote and permeated the entire enterprise of Nauvoo. However, while the Book of Mormon grounds Smith's claim to prophecy and divine authority and is essential to his role as prophet and president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Smith's authority did not rest on the doctrinal content of the book.[35] Smith's role and authority as prophet as well as the entire institutional structure of the church and social structure of Mormon cities rested firmly on his claim to be the inspired translator of an ancient book of scripture rather than the ordinary author of a human literary work. Or, as Terryl Givens asserts, the significance of the Book of Mormon is connected to its status as *signifier*

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[33] "Title Page," The Book of Mormon.
[34] For example, see 3 Nephi 26:19, 4 Nephi 1:3.
[35] Thus is emphasized by the fact that in his public sermons in Nauvoo Joseph Smith cited the Book of Mormon only twenty-three times, but quoted or paraphrased the Bible more than six hundred times. See Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991), 44.

rather than as *signified*: "The Book of Mormon is preeminently a concrete manifestation of sacred utterance, and thus an evidence of divine presence, before it is a repository of theological claims."[36] An acceptance of the miraculous appearance of the Book of Mormon was thus as important to the Mormon movement and to the community of Nauvoo as belief in its doctrinal contents. Smith's status as prophet and the success of his city rested on his follower's acceptance of the ongoing revelation that he received, and these new channels of revelation were tangibly embodied in the Book of Mormon.

Russian critic Mikhail Bahktin has suggested a framework that is useful in understanding the role of the Book of Mormon in establishing Joseph Smith's identity and authority as prophet. Bahktin claims that there are two types of language or discourse that influence people: internally persuasive discourse and authoritative discourse. Authoritative discourse does not rely on the logic of argument or any other appeal contained in it. According to Bahktin, "The authoritative word demands that we acknowledge it, that we make it our own; it binds us, quite independent of any power it might have to persuade us internally; we encounter it with its authority already fused to it." This type of text "enters our verbal consciousness as a compact and indivisible mass; one must either totally affirm it, or totally reject it. It is indissolubly fused with its authority—with political power, an institution—and it stands and falls together with that authority."[37] The Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith's prophetic authority were an all-or-nothing enterprise. Smith and the Book of Mormon made an absolute religious claim on his followers that could not be accepted halfway. People either believed him

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[36] Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched New World Religion* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), 64.

[37] Mikhail Bahktin, "Discourse in the Novel," *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 42, 47; Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 80-82.

wholeheartedly or rejected him and the church he had established. Seen in this sense, the Book of Mormon, while ostensibly a religious history of ancient America, is a text that establishes a certain kind of prophetic authority for Joseph Smith.

The focus on origin rather than content and prophetic authority, and revelatory experience rather than textual authority, provided Smith and the Mormon community with a strong authoritative but flexible framework in interpreting and applying scripture and in community building. Although Smith was dogged by previous failures in city building, he reasserted his authority and sacralized the city of Nauvoo through ongoing prophetic revelation. For example, the Saints had been commanded in revelation to establish Zion at the divinely appointed location in Independence, Missouri. Yet almost exactly two years later, the Mormons in Independence had been forced to sign an agreement to leave their Zion in Independence and Jackson County.[38] In a revelation given in January 1841, Smith declared that Nauvoo was "the cornerstone of Zion" and commanded the Saints to build a temple there. This revelation turned what had been an economic necessity to settle in the swamps along the Mississippi River into a divinely sanctioned decision. Further revelations mitigated what could have been perceived as failure or defeat. A later revelation states, "let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God." Smith later defined Zion as "the pure in heart," and "all of North and South America," validating the Mormons' later enterprises in Nauvoo and in the West.[39] Through Smith's revelations and exercise of prophetic authority former failures were incorporated into the fabric of a grand design: clearly the Lord wanted his Saints to settle in Nauvoo. The construction of a temple

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[38]The Doctrine and Covenants Section 57 and Section 97 Heading.

[39] The Doctrine and Covenants 101:16, 97:21; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:318-319.

sanctioned Smith's choice of location and sacralized the city that rose from the swamps of the Mississippi. Smith's unique prophetic authority literally changed the city of Nauvoo from a backup plan after the failure of Zion to a sacred city sanctioned by God and crowned with a holy temple.

The physical temple itself also sustained Smith's ultimate authority as God's mouthpiece. As prophet, Smith was generally considered the chief architect of the temple.[40] William Weeks was the official architect, but Joseph Smith introduced many changes to his plans including the sun, moon and star stones and the round windows lighting the half story between the first and second floors. On 4 February 1844, Joseph Smith recorded the following conversation in his journal:

> In the afternoon, Elder William Weeks (whom I had employed as architect of the Temple,) came in for instruction. I instructed him in relation to the circular windows designed to light the offices in the dead work of the arch between stories. He said that round windows in the broad side of a building were a violation of all the known rules of architecture, and contended that they should be semicircular–that the building was too low for round windows. I told him I would have the circles, if he had to make the Temple ten feet higher than it was originally calculated; that one light at the centre of each circular window would be sufficient to light the whole room; that when the whole building was thus illuminated, the effect would be remarkably grand. "I wish you to carry out *my* designs. I have seen in vision the splendid appearance of that building illuminated, and will have it built according to the pattern shown me."[41]

Smith felt perfectly comfortable "instructing" the trained architect, and his prophetic authority won out over the experience and advice of the seasoned architect: circular

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[40] For example, Charlotte Haven wrote from Nauvoo in 1843 that the Temple has "its origin with Joseph Smith." Charlotte Haven, "A Girl's Letters from Nauvoo," 620. The *Southern Literary Messenger* (Richmond, VA) reported that the Prophet "is said to have been the architect who planned the building; if this be true he has displayed as much skill in fabricating buildings as religions. He deserves no credit for it, however, since his followers declare that he received the plan by special revelation." Edwin De Leon, "The Rise and Progress of the Mormon Faith and People," *Southern Literary Messenger* (September 1844): 536, Making of America, University of Michigan, <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moajrnl/ >>, 2 May 2008.
[41] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:196-197.

windows were included in the Nauvoo temple. The successful incorporation of the round windows against architectural tradition served to further cement the prophet's authority, even in matters that were not explicitly religious. The prophet's word was law, even if it went in the face of tradition, accepted practices or common sense.

Étienne Cabet's authority on the other hand was limited, contested and completely dependent upon the content of the texts he produced to express his unique version of utopianism. Cabet's "mathematical approach" to social problems resulted in *Voyage en Icarie*, a utopian novel that he published anonymously in 1839. This single text became Cabet's primary piece of propaganda in outlining his unique utopian system and in attracting new adherents to his movement. It also became the handbook of Icarianism and the foundation for the community that Cabet established at Nauvoo. *Voyage* was the most explicit and binding exposition of Icarian beliefs and practices, and a careful study of the book was prerequisite to being admitted to the community in Nauvoo.[42] This important work not only lent its name to the movement, but it became the "doctrinal backbone" of the movement, actively shaping the real-life community that emerged in Nauvoo.[43]

With a transparent veneer of fiction, in the six-hundred-page *Voyage* Cabet outlines in great detail the perfections of Icaria, a fictional land in the New World. The volume is divided into three parts. The first comprises over three hundred pages and contains a detailed description of the imagined country of Icaria, its social structures, economy, government and family life. The second section, consisting of over two hundred pages, tells of the transformation of Icaria from debauched monarchy to

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[42] Robert D. Bush, 415. Those admitted to the community were also required to have a small personal library that included a copy of *Voyage*. Kesten, 138.
[43] Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 82.

enlightened communistic republic under "*le bon dictateur Icar*." It also contains a careful and exhaustive study of philosophers and historical movements related to communal life in which Cabet outlines their strengths and weaknesses in comparison to the Icarian system, which he casts as clearly superior. The concluding part is a succinct summary of Cabet's principles of communism.[44]

Although the book purported to be nothing more than a sociological treatise in the form of a novel, its readers received it differently. More than one reader referred to the text as a "Koran," others accepted it as "a new gospel," and one man wrote to Cabet that he considered the book as his breviary.[45] Many Icarians read the book through several times, studying it regularly as others studied the Bible. Cabet approved and encouraged such devoted attention to the book. Every member of the community was expected to have read the book prior to their admission, and each family was provided with a library of selected Icarian texts that included *Voyage en Icarie*. The book was also incorporated as the primary text of the community's *Cours icarien*, a gathering of Icarians every Sunday, which was the Icarian version of Sabbath religious services. During these meetings, Cabet read and expounded on excerpts from *Voyage* and *Vrai Christianisme* to illustrate and explain Icarian principles.[46]

Voyage en Icarie exemplifies what Bahktin calls "internally persuasive discourse." In contrast to authoritative discourse, internally persuasive discourse relies upon logic, argument or emotional appeal. In the course of the *Voyage en Icarie*, Cabet

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[44] For an English translation see Étienne Cabet, *Travels in Icaria*, trans. Leslie J. Roberts (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press), 2003.

[45] Piotrowski, 129; Hillquit, 11; Prudhommeaux, 195; *Le Populaire*, 5 September 1847. A *bréviare* is often defined figuratively as a Bible; it is an ecclesiastical book with prayers, hymns and offices used by clergymen.

[46] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, vi; The *cours icariens* were discontinued while Cabet was in Paris in 1851 and was reinstated only after his return to Nauvoo. See Sutton, *Les Icarians*, 80.

methodically describes in detail the conditions of Icaria; he also outlines the philosophies of important social thinkers and their impact on history and his own movement. The novel patently promotes education and admires the intellect and reason of its imagined citizens. The entire book is a paean to the thinking, rational individual and to the orderly community. *Voyage* as internally persuasive discourse lends itself to, and in fact demands, analysis, negotiation and critique.

Cabet's insistence on the primacy of *Voyage* to the Icarian enterprise eventually compromised his own personal authority in the community. Robert Sutton perceptively notes that *Voyage en Icarie* rather than Étienne Cabet was "the sole authority from beginning to end" of the Icarian movement.[47] Étienne Cabet's position as founder and leader of Icaria and his authority in the community rested on the logic and emotional sway of his arguments, thus necessarily exposing both his arguments and his authority to analysis and critique. Maintaining his authority in Nauvoo depended on his ability to persuade his people through continuing discourse.[48] *Voyage en Icarie* and other important Icarian texts, including the Icarian constitution, ordered and defined the community in contractual terms that were so specific and concrete that they allowed for little flexibility or maneuverability in the face of contradiction, difficulties or opposition. Once Cabet had written and printed the outlines of Icaria, they became a fixed pattern that could not be changed without compromising the integrity of the Icarian community. A literary work rather than a person was the primary authority in the community, and Cabet's fictional work eventually eclipsed his own influence in Nauvoo as founder and director of Icarianism. This inflexible textual authority presented a serious dilemma as the

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[47] Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 82; Sutton, "An American Elysium," 288.
[48] Bahktin, 42, 47; Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 80-82.

community developed and as Cabet sought to define and expand his own authority. Cabet's authority rested firmly on the content of his doctrine; once he contradicted his own doctrinal content in implementing new reforms and in modifying the constitution, his authority was compromised and his followers were able to reject his authority while remaining loyal to his initial vision of fraternity and equality in community. As the ultimate authority in the community, *Voyage* was the standard, and when measured against it, Cabet came up short. Eventually this conflict between text and author, constitution and leader, led to the great schism of 1856 that divided Icaria and sowed the seeds of its eventual downfall.[49]

While Smith's authority ensured success at Nauvoo, Cabet's authority proved unequal to transforming the city into a real-life Icaria. Cabet tried to instill confidence into his followers, but with limited success. The key difference between the two communities and the embodied authority of their leaders is most clearly represented in the central building of each community. While Joseph Smith erected the temple thereby reinforcing both his religious and social authority, Étienne Cabet became the victim of circumstance and failed to realize his grandiose visions for what he had planned to be the focus of Icaria in Nauvoo. When he purchased the temple ruins, Cabet declared that the "gigantic monument" of the temple ruins was to be turned into a "grand common house" that would house their "Academy, schools, library, offices, physical and chemical offices, assembly courses, observatory and propaganda [office]." It would be the "high peak" from which "republican, communitarian doctrine and [the] evangelical principles of

[49] One of the main reasons for the majority's opposition to Cabet was that he placed himself above the Icarian constitution. Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 88-89. For more about conflict in Icaria and the schism of 1856 see Chapter 7.

Fraternity of Men and People would be sent out."[50] Instead, the tornado that blew down the temple walls forced Cabet to "begin again on the place of the temple, *provisional* and *urgent* construction," two adjectives which characterized much of Icarian Nauvoo.[51] Nauvoo clearly did not live up to the perfect picture presented in *Voyage*, and Icarians felt disappointed, deceived and cheated. Members complained about housing and the "many things that were missing." They had no gardens, tools, or "anything in particular." What they did have was lots of hard work, heavy expenses, homesickness and illness.[52] Icarian Jean-Claude Cretinon wrote that after six years of hard work, the colony had not produced any "satisfying results," and he, along with many others, left the community, "disillusioned and disenchanted with communal life."[53] Most of the disenchanted Icarians blamed Cabet for the community's shortcomings, and they eventually decided that the community would be better off without him.

Étienne Cabet dictated Icaria's location over the protests of many of his followers and then was forced by circumstances to change his mind, transforming the original utopia outlined in *Voyage* into a sort of halfway house. The Icarian community at Nauvoo continued to flounder, which caused Cabet to reconsider the wisdom in settling there. Cabet waffled; rather than transforming Nauvoo into the glorious utopia painted in the

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[50] *Le Populaire*, 7 April 1850.
[51] *Deseret News*, 24 August 1850, quoted in Joseph Earl Arrington, "Destruction of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo," 424, my emphasis.
[52] "Lettre de Madame Chartre à ses parents," Nauvoo, 1 août 1849, and "Lettre de Camus à ses parents," Nauvoo, 10 août 1849, in Cabet, *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 4*, 85; *Colonie ou République icarienne aux États-Unis.—Son Histoire*, quoted in Prudhommeaux, 272-273.
[53] Rude, *Voyage en Icarie: deux ouvriers viennois aux États-Unis en 1855*, 167.

pages of *Voyage*, Cabet declared that the city would be only a "*champ de manoeuvre*," or staging ground, preparatory to the real, permanent Icaria that would be founded later.[54]

Mormon Democratic Authority

Beyond the difference between the authority of the apostle and the authority of the genius, the Mormon and Icarian systems differed in the balance between hierarchical authority and democratic participation. Though authority in the Mormon system was centered in the prophet, the church was founded on a belief in universal revelation and organized around the priesthood. These two elements—revelation and priesthood—ensured male democratic participation and gave the general membership of the church a sense of investment and ownership in the destiny of the church and community at Nauvoo while maintaining a carefully controlled hierarchy. The careful balance between participation and control, democracy and authority, was an important reason for the ongoing cohesion of the Mormon community.

The balance and distribution of power the Mormons found in Nauvoo have roots in the formative experience of Joseph Smith's First Vision twenty years earlier. The First Vision underwrote Smith's claim to divine authority, but it also provided a pattern for converts of reflection, prayer and spiritual experience that would confirm their conviction and ensure their allegiance to the church and its prophet. Smith's remarkable experience

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[54] Cabet to Beluze, 6 August 1849, Cabet collection, microfilm, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois. See also Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis*, 6, 24; Étienne Cabet, "Petition of the Icarians to the Members of Congress of the United States of America by Cabet," in *Colonie Icarienne* vol. 1 no.4 [1854], Gundy Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 68. The "permanent community" was located in Corning, Iowa. Lands were purchased there in 1851, and the community moved there in 1857 after the schism in Nauvoo. They remained there until the community dissolved in 1898. For more information about the community at Corning see Sutton, *Les Icariens* and Prudhommeaux.

became a paradigm for his followers. In talking about his experience with divinity, Smith was not just stating what he had done and seen, but was telling others what they could potentially do and see for themselves. The Book of Mormon supported this same notion. The Book of Mormon was evidence that God had spoken again to his prophet, but it also contained the promise that God could and would speak to others as well. It promised personal spiritual manifestation or revelation, and throughout its pages it modeled what Terryl Givens terms "dialogic revelation," a kind of divine discourse that teaches that revelation is not just the privilege of prophets, but a real possibility for every person.[55] The Book of Mormon's appeal and radicalism lay in the fact that it encouraged its readers to seek personal revelation and held out the expectation that they could receive it just as their prophet did. Indeed, Mormon converts were expected to have some sort of divine spiritual confirmation of the message of Mormonism as part of their conversion experience. The significance and validity of Mormonism and the cities it fostered rested upon the replicability of divine revelation.[56]

Revelation concomitantly ensured institutional stability and a democratic sense of privilege and participation, which appealed to its adherents. The primacy of revelatory experience in Mormonism opened the door for others to experience divine revelation, but it also validated Joseph Smith's unique claim to prophetic authority. Revelation given to individuals served to underwrite the supreme revelation given to the prophet and the authority that stemmed from that revelation. If the Book of Mormon promised revelation

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[55] Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*, 208, 220; Terryl L. Givens, *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America*, 114.

[56] Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 73; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 39; Joseph Fielding McConkie, "The God of Joseph Smith," Introduction to Regional Studies-Illinois. *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History–Illinois*, ed. H. Dean Garrett (Provo: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1995), 207.

to all people, Smith's later revelations defined and limited prophetic authority and revelation, inhibiting erratic claims to authority, which had been the downfall of other charismatic churches and utopian communities of the nineteenth century. This ensured continuity and order within both church leadership and the rank and file of lay members.[57] As the prophet and president of the church, Joseph Smith was the only one authorized to receive revelation for the body of the church, but individual members were entitled and able to receive revelation and inspiration for their individual stewardships as apostle, bishop, missionary, or patriarch, as long as it did not contradict official church revelations and established policies.

The priesthood, or Mormon system of leadership and authority, operated on the same system of democratic participation and hierarchical control. For Mormons, priesthood means the right of those men holding it to act for God, and it constitutes "the perfect system of government."[58] Many converts were attracted by Mormonism's claims to authority and by the democratic application of priesthood without a professional clergy. Virtually every male member of the church was offered priesthood power; no one was disqualified because of lack of wealth, education or experience. By 1846, three-fourths of Nauvoo's male residents held the priesthood. Through the priesthood, ordinary men were endowed with the power of God, and they became active participants in saving

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[57] Terryl L. Givens, *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America*, 151; Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 121. For revelations outlining the prophet's exclusive right to direct the church and speak for God see The Doctrine and Covenants 28:1-7, 35:3-4, 17-20, 42:2-3, 43:2-7, 90:4.

[58] *Times and Seasons*, 1 December 1841; Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 280; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:550.

souls and in building the kingdom of God. Access to the priesthood gave them a sense of ownership in the church's destiny and tied them to that destiny.[59]

This widespread priesthood authority could have proved a threat to the stability of the church and the authority of its prophet had it not been carefully channeled and controlled within a specific church hierarchy. Church leaders regulated ordinations to the priesthood and created a strong theocratic organization to counter the centrifugal pressures of democratic priesthood power and to channel personal religious experience toward the localized Mormon center.[60] While the priesthood endowed individuals with power, it also embedded them in a hierarchy of priesthood offices, a sort of pyramid of organized influence. In the Mormon ecclesiastical structure authority flowed from top to bottom. At the top of the Mormon hierarchical pyramid was God, whose church and kingdom it was. While men directed the church on earth, God was still sovereign. Next in line was the prophet and president of the church who in turn ordered the Twelve Apostles, who were ordinary men called to receive revelation and teach the principles of salvation. The Apostles then directed the Seventy and the lesser priesthood, and so on down through the chain of authority.[61]

Priesthood authority and patriarchal prerogative extended into individual families as well. In many ways the Mormon family was no different from any other family in America. In American society, the husband usually held the balance of power because he controlled the resources, a dominance reinforced by laws, social mores and parental

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[59] Hartley, 71-76; De Pillis, 77; Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 265; Backman, 109; Steven C. Harper, "Missionaries in the American Religious Marketplace: Mormon Proselyting in the 1830s," *Journal of Mormon History* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 4; Leonard, 221.
[60] Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 153; Cooper, 66.
[61] Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 205, 265; Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 107-108.

power patterns.[62] This authority for Mormons in Nauvoo was reinforced by religious organization and the concept of priesthood authority. Joseph Smith taught that the man was the "head" of the family and that the wife was subject to him in all of his "holy purposes." As the head of the household, the husband and father presided in the home and had the responsibility of supporting and leading his family. But men also had a "great duty" to fulfill to their wives.[63] Smith departed from the prevailing nineteenth-century model of patriarchal authority in stressing kindness, charity, patience and virtue as the basis for authority in the home and in the church.[64] Priesthood authority was not arbitrary and absolute, but rather rested upon worthiness and the fulfillment of very clear expectations. One article printed in a Mormon newspaper exhorted Mormon men to "love, cherish, and nourish his wife, and cleave unto her and none else. . . . It is his duty to be a man of God who is ready at all times to obtain from the scriptures, the revelations, and from on high, such instructions as are necessary for the edification, and salvation of his household."[65]

This pyramid of priesthood hierarchy extending from the prophet down through individual heads of households is illustrated in the large assembly room on the first floor of the Nauvoo temple where most of the important church meetings were held. At either end of the room were a series of pulpits, arranged in four tiers and representing the

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[62] Marybeth Raynes, "Mormon Marriages in an American Context" in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, eds. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 227.
[63] Joseph Fielding Smith, ed. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1977), 212, 223-29.
[64] The Doctrine and Covenants 121:45; Raynes, 228-229.
[65] *Elders Journal* (Far West, Missouri) August 1838, p.61, Early Mormonism Collection 2, <<http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/eldjur04.htm.>>, 13 January 2009.

different orders and offices of priesthood authority.[66] As prophet and president of the church, Joseph Smith sat at the top in the center of the pulpits and was flanked by other priesthood authorities drawn from the general membership of the church. These pulpits included church officials drawn from all walks of life, emphasizing the democratic nature of church leadership, but they were also arranged in a very clear hierarchy of ascending authority, in a visual representation of the balance between hierarchic authority and democratic participation. Members were seated in the congregations as families, illustrating the extension of priesthood authority from the official church leadership to individual family patriarchs. Decisions regarding church policy were announced from the pulpit, but the entire membership of the church, men and women, voted to approve or disapprove these proposals, in what was known as the "law of common consent."[67]

Icarian Authoritarianism

Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* showcases an Icaria that is an enlightened democracy, a country in which "the People are emperor, pope and king."[68] Valmor, an Icarian, takes Carisdall, the narrator, on a tour of the national palace where the legislative assembly meets to deliberate and pass laws. Valmor, speaking for Cabet, celebrates the representational government, composed of men from every background and profession elected by popular vote. But, he points out, the national assembly, the most powerful body in the nation, is subject to the People, who are sovereign. In Icaria, "all are citizens,

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[66] Brown and Smith, 177-178; Luce, 36.
[67] This law was outlined in scripture (see Doctrine and Covenants 26:2) and allowed for the sustaining vote of church membership for the calling of new church officers, policies, major decisions, acceptance of new scripture and other things that affected the lives of the members.
[68] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 177.

equal in rights, electors and eligible [for office], all members of the People."[69] Any Icarian citizen (and under Cabet's system only male members are considered full citizens) can speak, vote and even be elected to public office. As Valmor explains, all citizens have the opportunity to "become accustomed to public affairs in popular assemblies," and "almost all carry out some public functions."[70] The executive branch of the government is composed of a president, who is depicted as a servant of the people, answerable to the national assembly for the execution of laws. All national affairs are conducted publicly and unanimously for the good of the People.

The equality and democracy that are hallmarks of Icarian society in *Voyage* are underwritten by two important tenets: reason and education. Cabet declared that the Icarian system was a democratic one based on the universality of reason, which he cast as the foundation of an enlightened, perfected society. "Our system," he proudly claimed, "is founded on reason."[71] God "had made men different among themselves, but equal in power, and especially in rights." But,

> above all He . . . gives them *Reason*. . . . Why did not Providence make all men equal, but the same in everything, in shape, in beauty, in color, in physical force, in intelligence? Why? . . . but has he not given them *Reason*? . . . And is *Reason* not sufficient to indicate to men the means of exercising his rights and of assuring his happiness in establishing Equality? Is not *Reason* sufficient to properly organize Society, to create Equality of education and by consequence of capacity, the Equality of work and of fortune, the Equality of social and political rights? Yes, *Reason* is a secondary Providence that is able to create Equality in everything.[72]

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[69] Ibid., 37.
[70] Ibid., 176.
[71] Étienne Cabet, *Société Fraternelle Centrale*, 10ème discours (Paris: au bureau du Populaire, 1848), 5, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 18 July 2007.
[72] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 387, 594, emphasis in original.

Cabet depicted reason as a divine gift given by God to all men and claimed that the universality of reason would correct society's problems and ensure an enlightened equality. He firmly believed that the proper use of reason would lead anyone to recognize the superiority of the Icarian system to that of all other political or social systems. In spite of his focus on reason and equality, however, Cabet admitted that men were not equally endowed with wisdom; all men possessed reason, but not in equal amounts. Nature made men equal in strength and intelligence, he claimed, but society made men unequal in education and training.[73] Education was the key to developing reason and establishing equality that would in turn ensure the eventual success of the community. In *Voyage*, Cabet explains that in Icaria "from childhood, [Icarians'] education gives [them] the physical and moral habits necessary to men in society and especially to the citizen in assembly."[74] All Icarians were given an equal education, whose primary goal was to create useful and informed citizens.

Cabet's depiction of democracy in Icaria breaks down under close scrutiny and was never realized in Nauvoo. Throughout *Voyage* Cabet inserted constant references to "*le bon dictateur Icar.*" Cabet is careful to ensure that the adjective "good" is usually tacked on to the title of dictator to mitigate the negative connotation of such an autocratic authority, but the fact remains that Cabet's Icaria was founded by, named after and preserved by a dictator. *Voyage* depicts a country run by men "ripened by age and experience" and also by "men of genius," represented most clearly by Icar. As a self-described "genius," Cabet could and did call upon his superior reason, education and experience to undermine the ostensibly democratic system he set up, just as the good

[73] Ibid., 384; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 147-148.
[74] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 184.

dictator Icar subtly compromised the democracy depicted in the novel. Cabet's constant emphasis on the training and use of reason served primarily to substantiate his claims to ultimate authority within the community and undermined the notion of absolute equality that was so prominent in his utopian writings. Cabet admitted that it would take at least fifty years for the educational system to establish a level playing field. In the meantime, Cabet was the ultimate example of a man of reason, one who was qualified not only by the natural endowment of nature, but also by a lifetime of study and reflection to design, guide and shape Icaria. While not uneducated or ignorant (one requirement of admission was the ability to read and write), the mass of Icarians were members of the working class who did not have the opportunity to acquire more than the very rudiments of an education.[75] In a community composed mostly of workers and artisans, the focus on reason allowed Cabet to exercise a veritable dictatorship as he had a monopoly on education and study which could never hoped to be matched by his fellow adult Icarians.

Icarians expected to participate in the democracy Cabet outlined in *Voyage en Icarie*. In the real Icaria Cabet was careful to divide power into the legislative and executive branches, represented by the General Assembly and the *Gérance*, respectively. The General Assembly was the legislative body composed of all male members over the age of twenty who were definitively admitted to the community. They met to discuss problems and regulations in the community in the refectory at monthly meetings where attendance for the entire community was mandatory. The *Gérance* was formed of six men, elected by the General Assembly, who oversaw certain areas of the Icarian

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[75] *Revue Icarienne* (Nauvoo), vol. 1, no. 6, 1855, Iowa State Historical Society Collection, Box 3, Folder 2, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois. For more on education in nineteenth-century France see Snyder, "Socialization and Education of Children."

experience such as finance, industry, clothes and food, etc. The six members of the *Gérance* oversaw these matters in the community, but ultimate sovereignty rested fully with Cabet as the *gérant-directeur*.[76] The *gérant-directeur* was the head of the executive branch and oversaw all activities of the General Assembly and *Gérance*. Cabet wrote that the *gérant-directeur* (a post always filled by Cabet until the schism of 1856) was a "servant and representative of society"; he was to consider himself the "brother of all the associates," to "have no other interest than the common interest, to consecrate and devote himself entirely to the common good, and to set the example of all the civic and social virtues."[77]

Cabet clarified his role in the *Contrat social*, his version of an Icarian constitution, which had to be accepted by all members prior to admission to the Icarian society in Nauvoo. The *Contrat social* stated that Cabet would be the "*directeur-gérant*" and would claim all power "that was indicated in *Voyage en Icarie* and all that would be continually outlined in an Icarian program." He claimed absolute "moral responsibility" for the community. He screened and approved the admission of new members; he was responsible for finances and directed the community's economic life; he made purchases for the community, and he demanded these absolute powers for a period of ten years.[78] Cabet defended his position by stating that "dictatorship, when it is conferred or accepted by the people, is not the negation but the affirmation and the exercise of the Sovereignty

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[76] Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 210.
[77] Quoted in *Cooperative Communities*, 8.
[78] *Le Populaire*, 19 September 1847; Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 49.

of the People," claiming the same happy balance between dictatorship and democracy that existed in *Voyage* under "*le bon dictateur Icar.*"[79]

Upon arrival in America, Cabet relinquished his demand for a ten-year term, thinking that perhaps their American neighbors would consider a ten-year dictatorship as un-American and a threat to their democratic system. Since the initial establishment of the Icarian constitution, Cabet had also become aware of the Mormons' disastrous end in Nauvoo and the tremendous antagonism generated by their prophet-president. He realized that the latent hostility among Illinoisans who would be their new neighbors had been animated by the usurpation of power by a single individual. He therefore modified the Icarian Constitution, providing for a regular reelection of the *directeur-gérant.*[80] Yet his authority went uncontested, and he was re-elected year after year without a single contrary vote until 1855 when he again sought to assert his power and modify the constitution, this time because he was under the "necessity of asking for more authority."[81] He had left this avenue open for himself in *Voyage* where Icar had absolute power and where every aspect of life—food, clothes, recreation, etc.—was carefully controlled.[82] While Icarianism was democratic in that all male members over age twenty had a voice in matters concerning the community, actual democratic avenues of pressure and change did not exist in the face of Cabet's almost unchecked authority.

The nature of Icaria as a near dictatorship rather than a true democracy is revealed in the layout of the refectory, where meetings of the general assembly were held. When

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[79] Rude, 11

[80] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 48; Étienne Cabet, "Le Fondateur d'Icarie aux Icariens" (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1856), 5, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 30 November 2007.

[81] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 228.

[82] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 52.

the general assembly was in session, tables were pushed against the walls and all the benches were arranged in a semi-circle. At the center of the benches and thus at the center of everyone's attention was a table on top of another table which served as the desk for the President of the community and his two secretaries. All those who attended the meeting were arranged in relation to the President's desk at the center according to their standing in the community. Below and in front of Cabet were seated the members of the *gérance*, or Icarian governing body, who were in turn surrounded by members of the community.[83] Cabet was thus literally and figuratively at the center of the community and above all the other members. This resonates with his discussion of the meeting of the General Assembly in *Voyage*, held in the *Palais national*, the "most beautiful monument on earth." Carisdall compares the interior to a throne room in the palace of a monarch, but it is the room of a "*People* Emperor, Pope and King."[84] The implicit hierarchy that was illustrated in *Voyage* was carried out in Nauvoo, where it became a visual representation of the contradiction between a society of equal brothers and a patriarchy controlled by one man.

Icarian Nauvoo bore the indelible imprint of Cabet, its architect and premier intellect. Cabet controlled all economic resources, print, discipline, labor, external relations, admissions and dismissals; he also determined the distribution of housing, the placement of workshops and shops, schools and public buildings.[85] Alfred Piquenard, an Icarian and architect by profession, was the one who designed the buildings constructed

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[83] *La Colonie Icarienne*, 19 juillet 1854; Étienne Cabet, "Réception et Admission dans la Communauté Icarienne des 38 Icariens partis du Havre le 8 septembre 1853" (Paris: L'auteur, 1854), 9-10, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 112.
[84] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 177-178.
[85] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 78.

by the Icarians, but Cabet still maintained control over the nature and appearance of the buildings, leaving Piquenard to work out the architectural details to accord with Cabet's vision. Cabet thus had almost complete control over shaping the community both ideologically and spatially.

"Brother Joseph" and "Father Cabet"

The difference between the Mormon and Icarian models of authority is captured in the difference between fraternity and patriarchy. Ironically, Mormons, who adopted the patriarchal model of priesthood as outlined in the Old Testament, enjoyed a more equal system of fraternal association than the Icarians. While Joseph Smith was accepted as the venerated patriarch and prophet of Mormonism, his followers often called him "Brother Joseph," in keeping with the tradition of calling all fellow believers brother and sister.[86] This emphasized their belief that all were children of God and equal in his eyes. This fraternal model established members of the community as equals and siblings rather than parents and children and served to diffuse some of the more authoritarian aspects of Mormonism. It also emphasized the sense of unity and community among the Saints in Nauvoo. The temple underscored this sense of equality and fraternity among the Saints; all faithful members could participate in sacred temple ordinances and in them were promised eternal blessings. The temple was evidence of Joseph Smith's claim that, "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and

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[86] Examples include Talitha C. Avery Cheney, *Autobiography and Biography*, 2, copy of typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Ann Hughlings Pitchforth, letter to parents in England May 1845 on arrival in Nauvoo in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *In their Own Words: Women and the Story of Nauvoo* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 148. Church leaders were almost universally referred to as "Brother," i.e. Brother Brigham for Brigham Young, etc.

even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them."[87] While Smith was privileged as the revealer of spiritual truths, such knowledge was not monopolized, but was available to all, primarily through the temple.

Icarianism, which touted fraternity as the foundation of ideal society, was a patriarchal system that centered on the person and authority of Étienne Cabet. In scores of letters and addresses Icarians referred to Cabet as their "dear and venerated Father" or "father of communism." They affectionately called him "Papa," and his followers considered themselves "his Icarian children," and "submitted absolutely to [his] paternal authority."[88] While Icarians initially offered this title to Cabet as a tribute, it established an inherently unequal relationship between the founder and leader of Icaria and his adherents. Cabet was the father, the ultimate authority, while his followers were children, inferior in understanding and authority.[89] Cabet initially cast his authority as a benign sort of paternalism, declaring, "I am so filled with love, with consideration and devotion for your little girls and boys, as if they were my own children, that I love them even more perhaps than you [their parents], for I love them just as much, and my love is more enlightened, more capable of making them happy."[90] Yet even in this seemingly affectionate passage, Cabet emphasizes his fatherly love to qualify him to exercise a

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[87] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:380.

[88] *Le Populaire*, 7 octobre 1849; Étienne Cabet. "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 16 au 22 Juin 1850," Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; "Adresses des Icariens de Nauvoo au Citoyen Cabet; Protestations de quelques dissidens et réponse du Citoyen Cabet" (Paris: Bureau du Populaire, 1851), 4, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica" << http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>, 18 July 2007; "Adresse de la première avant garde: 2 février 1848," in Cabet, *Opinions et sentiments publiquement exprimés*, 3, 19; Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*. 2eme livraison, 101; "Lettre de D. . . , Avocat, Icarien au Bureau de Paris," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 30 August 1854.

[89] Christopher Johnson points out that the use of *Père* began in 1846 with the increasing sectarian trend of Icarianism and Cabet's concomitant centralization of authority around himself. See Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 217.

[90] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 225.

parent's authority over the members of the community, especially the children. Following the Icarians' settlement in Nauvoo, Cabet grew increasingly totalitarian, insisting that community members call him Father and instituting what Robert Sutton has termed "draconian measures."[91] When Bourgeois of Beaumont left the community, he wrote that, "M. Cabet stopped the children from calling their parents *papa* and *maman*, he forced them to say *mon parent* and they were forced to call Cabet *mon père*."[92] Conflict and contradiction over Cabet's title and role in the community escalated until the conflict of 1856 when Cabet was expelled from the community.

The inherent contradiction between the practice of patriarchy and the ideal fraternity tore at the very fabric of Icarianism until the entire movement foundered and split. Patriarchal authority, like the aristocracy of reason, compromised and belied the entire Icarian enterprise. The existence of a "papa" undermined the essential Icarian doctrine of fraternity, which was the first and last "creed" of Icarianism. If all were equal, if all were brothers, then Cabet would have been "Brother Cabet" rather than "Papa Cabet." The existence of a father automatically created a hierarchy in which the father-leader had authority and precedence over the brother-followers. The contradiction of Cabet's position in Icaria was actually built into the community. The spatial arrangements of Icarian Nauvoo, which emphasized simplicity and equality, included one glaring exception: Cabet's private house, which was located across the street from Temple Square. Equality in housing and in furnishings was the rule in theory as well as in

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[91] *Le Populaire*, 11 July 1851. Cabet denied this charge. Sutton, "An American Elysium," 292. Some of the new measures imposed included silence in the workshops, no swearing, hunting or fishing for pleasure, no complaining about food, and "no criticism or muttering" about the laws and rules. Étienne Cabet, "Forty-Eight Articles" in Prudhommeaux, 346-348.

[92] *Le Populaire*, 11 July 1851.

practice in both the fictional and real Icaria. Families occupied roughly the same amount of space, with each couple occupying two rooms (children were lodged at the school).[93] Bachelors or single members shared rooms on the upper floor of the refectory once it was completed. Cabet proved a major exception to this practice. He lived in his own private, two-story house located across the street from the refectory and print shop just east of Temple Square; the house was referred to by Cabet and by the other members of the community as Cabet's house, a subtle implication of distinction and ownership.[94] Interestingly, the Icarians seemed either to ignore or accept Cabet's superior living arrangements, which were a tangible contradiction to the professed beliefs and practices of the entire community. Everyone seems to have taken Cabet's living situation as a matter of course, not worthy of comment. Even in the schism of 1856, Cabet's separate living quarters were not discussed as part of his abuses.

Figure 27 Cabet's House. Reprint of Blum, *Gateway*, 104.

Many of the early conflicts in Icaria were minor disagreements. One of the primary conflicts arose over labor within the community and complaints of hard work with unsatisfactory returns. The architect Piquenard quit Icaria when he was forced to dig coal.[95] Other members complained of and shirked weekly calls to unload logs from the river for use in Icarian building projects.[96] Members complained of the

[93] Sutton, "An American Elysium," 282-283.
[94] Blum, *Nauvoo: An American Heritage*, 21; Rogers, 125. There is no record of Cabet's having furnishings or personal belongings that other Icarians did not have.
[95] Dean Gabbert and Marilyn S. Candido, *Nauvoo* (Decatur, IL: William Street Press, 2006), 50.

stark and unvarying menu. Butter became a source of conflict when it was passed down the long tables of the refectory at meal times and some took more than their share, leaving those at the end of the table without. This was remedied by creating molds dividing the butter into equal portions, but then the Icarians were incensed at being treated like children.[97] Conflict arose over lodgings and who had the right to the newest and best Icarian apartments. These are seemingly small and isolated events, but they worked slowly and surely to undermine fraternity and compromise the community until Cabet had a full-blown revolt on his hands.

Cabet chalked up the departure of members to a lack of commitment, of understanding and of true Icarian character on the part of the dissidents.[98] In Cabet's eyes, Icaria was floundering not because the system was flawed (*Voyage* itself was ample proof of its perfection), but because the people involved in it were fundamentally flawed.[99] Dissidents' complaints were quite different. They criticized of the concentration of power, the suppression of liberty, the intolerance for opinions, the disarming of its citizens, the violation of the home in the obligatory removal of children to the boarding school, lies from the leaders, the shady dealings of the administration, systematic denunciations, governmental exploitation, the division of the people in classes, and the

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[96] Rev. J.C. Cummings, "The Icarians at Nauvoo," *The Keokuk (Iowa) Citizen*, 18 January 1924, Reynaud Collection, Folder 3, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Rude, 162.

[97] Prudhommeaux, 251, 521; Jacques Rancière, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-century France*, trans. John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 400; Lloyd Gundy, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in Butter Rights: Icarian Rules Can't Govern Everything"(paper presented at the 26th Annual Meeting of the National Icarian Heritage Society, Nauvoo Illinois, 14-17 July 1994); Vallet, 28.

[98] Cabet, "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 11 au 17 août 1850," Lundi, 12 août 1850, Étienne Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[99] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 214.

censuring of private letters, domestic communications and family affection. Most common among reasons for leaving the community were complaints of Cabet's dictatorial style and the disunion of families caused by Cabet's insistence on boarding children in a school to which parents had very limited access.[100] These conflicts and complaints festered until they became a full-blown civil war in 1856.

The schism and expulsion of Cabet in 1856 stemmed from his increasingly dictatorial leadership. After his return from France in 1852, Cabet became almost despotic. His confrontation in France with former Icarians who were suing him for fraud and embezzlement startled Cabet into a realization of the extent and danger of mutiny in his community. Once his faithful and devoted followers, Thorel and others were now bitter enemies, determined to see Cabet humiliated and defeated. Upon his return to Nauvoo, Cabet was alarmed at the laxity that had crept into Icaria during his fourteen-month absence. Determined to cement his authority and restore the purity of Icaria, Cabet instituted a moral purge. He determined to enforce absolutely the Icarian principles of family morality and sexual purity, casting out those accused of fornication and adultery.[101] He also insisted on absolute material equality, forbidding Icarians to retain any personal belongings. Cabet imposed a set of new restrictions on his followers known as the Forty-Eight Articles, which defied previous Icarian regulations. Among other things, the Forty-Eight Articles forbade alcohol and tobacco, demanded silence in the workshops, and required that every initiate renounce all individual property and eat

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[100] Prudhommeaux, 252; *La Colonie Icarienne*, 4 octobre 1854; Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 83.
[101] Étienne Cabet, "Un jugement en Icarie" (Paris: l'auteur, 1853), Bibliothèque nationale de France. Étienne Cabet, "Décision de l'Assemblée Générale contre la femme C. et E.G.," in Prudhommeaux, 340.

whatever they were served. Cabet declared that "if one is an Icarian one will obey willingly: if one hesitates, one is not an Icarian."[102]

The Forty-Eight Articles, rather than consolidating Cabet's authority, ended up compromising it. Cabet's increasing attempts at absolute control caused many Icarians to revolt against Cabet's authoritarianism, which had to that point been accepted almost as a matter of course. In the resulting civil war, members coalesced into groups for and against Cabet. In December 1855 Cabet told the Icarians he was too necessary to the community for it to survive without him. He laid down new demands including a revision of the Icarian Constitution to create a stronger presidency. The majority of Icarians refused. Their primary protest was that Cabet wanted too much authority, that he was becoming too much of a patriarch. They claimed Cabet wanted to govern "as an absolute master, as a *Papa*, a veritable *Papa*! . . . It is not a patriarch that we need."[103] They insisted that Cabet could not place himself above the constitution in his obvious disregard for regulation and his lust for power. Cabet's new regulations and increasing authoritarianism forced Icarians to choose between the founder of the community and the founding documents. Because Cabet's authority and the entire Icarian system were so intimately tied up with and dependent on textual authority, the majority of Icarians remained faithful to the Icarian doctrines and system rather than to the man who imagined them.

The conflict of 1856 drew a dividing line through the Icarian membership and quite literally through Icaria itself. Though the Icarian community continued in other forms and locations for another forty years, the schism of 1856 marked the beginning of

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[102] *Le Populaire*, 2 December 1849. For a complete list of the Articles see Prudhommeaux, 348-361.
[103] Favard in Cabet, "Le Fondateur d'Icarie aux Icariens," 24.

the end for Cabet's dream of an ideal society. Cabet's proposed reforms and increasing authoritarianism divided his followers into two groups: the majority who were against Cabet and his reforms, and the minority who still saw Cabet as the papa and only hope for the survival of the community. Both sides showed their disgust and tried to claim ascendancy over the other through food boycotts, work stoppages and street parades.[104] The conflict centered on the refectory as the most important building in the community. Members of the two groups separated themselves and ate on opposite sides of the dining room, creating a battlefront at the center and in the most important Icarian building. The refectory continued to be the focal point of contention among community members. When the conflict worsened and the minority refused to work, the majority, who controlled the refectory and dining room, declared that those of the minority who refused to work would not eat. When, after a day of revolt and inactivity, the minority, led by Cabet, presented themselves at the dining room and demanded food, violence broke out. The minority tried to force their way into the dining room and a massive food fight ensued.[105] Cut off from the refectory and other Icarian buildings on Temple Square, the minority under Cabet separated and withdrew from the community. As they left, the members of the minority carried off much of the moveable property of the community.[106] Cabet moved out of his Icarian home into a private house two blocks away. He rented a large building elsewhere in Nauvoo, which became the home of the minority until they

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[104] Sutton, "An American Elysium," 284.
[105] William Alfred Hinds, *American Communities and Co-operative Colonies* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Co., 1908), 373.
[106] Sutton, *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Secular Communities,* 63; Albert Shaw, *Icaria: A Chapter in the History of Communism* (New York and London: Putnam and Sons, 1884), 58, 75.

relocated to St. Louis later that year. Thus, for a period of time in 1856 there were two distinct Icarian communities existing in the same city.

The line of demarcation initially drawn through the refectory eventually became a definitive division through the entire community and its membership. In the dining hall where the general assembly met every week, Cabet was tried by his own followers and accused of authorizing and encouraging his supporters in the minority in stealing "tools, books, musical instruments, drugs, books of account, registers and many other objects belonging to the Icarian community." The General Assembly also found Cabet worthy of expulsion from the community because he had "removed from the home and office of the President to go and establish himself in a house outside of the Community for the more easily carrying on his deadly war against the said community." As a result, on 27 September 1856, it was "resolved that Etienne Cabet member and President of the Icarian Community is hereby expelled from the said Community."[107]

The fate of the city of Nauvoo under its Mormon and Icarian inhabitants was rooted in the disparate constructions of authority within each community and in how that authority was enforced throughout the community. Icaria's genesis was in the intellectual authority of genius and one man's vision of a perfect society. As founder and president of the community, Cabet kept all power and authority centralized in himself, essentially cloaking a dictatorship in the benign guise of a fraternal organization. Community members felt inferior, imposed upon, and when the community didn't live up to their expectations, they first blamed and then rejected Cabet, and finally abandoned Nauvoo

[107] "A Resolution of the General Assembly of the Icarian Community on the Expulsion of E. Cabet," 25 October 1856, Illinois State Historical Library Collection, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

altogether. The City of Joseph, on the other hand, was built up through prophetic authority, and it in turn sustained and reinforced the authority of its resident prophet. Nauvoo grew and prospered largely because of the centripetal, cohesive force of a prophet located quite literally at the center of the community. While maintaining careful control of the social and religious community, Smith distributed divine authority throughout the community through the priesthood, ensuring a sense of democratic participation and investment in the community. Smith's prophetic vision and authority imposed a sustaining and uniquely Mormon imprint on the Nauvoo landscape that defined his followers and unified them in their acceptance and realization of his lofty vision. Even after Smith's death, the city and experience he had created in Nauvoo served to sustain the Mormon community as they left Nauvoo to establish other cities in the West.

CHAPTER SIX

GENDER AND FAMILY

The city of Nauvoo, under both its Mormon and Icarian inhabitants, was composed of subtle but significant ways its inhabitants organized space to reflect and reinforce religious, economic and social hierarchies. One of the most important of these hierarchies related to the position and power of women within the communities. Both groups of women lived in the shadow of the temple walls, but for Mormon women, the rising temple spoke of doctrines, practices and organizations that validated women's roles as wife and mother and offered a framework within which women were able to exercise greater influence within the community. Icarian women also lived in the shadow of these same walls, but they were by then in ruins. The temple stones were converted into other buildings, most notably the school and the refectory, which devalued women's roles in the family and the community. These buildings became spatial enactments of women's marginalization and compartmentalization within the community.

The construction, understanding, and use of both private and public space are significant and often overlooked means of understanding women's lives in Nauvoo. The material city under both of its utopian inhabitants reflected important elements of communal living, including marriage, motherhood and family, work and community. The very different natures and uses of both private and public spaces in Nauvoo highlight the distinct attitudes toward women and offer vital insights into their varied experiences

within a communal setting. The constructed spaces of Nauvoo had a profound influence on the female members of both communities and offer compelling reasons for the eventual fates of each community.

Joining a utopian community was a trade-off for most women, including Mormon and Icarian women. Many communities, such as the Shakers, Fourierists, and Owenites, devoted specific attention to women's reforms. They promised women better education, full partnership in the society, relief from the drudgery of work, freedom from financial worry, and even more comfortable clothing. However, women usually found utopian communities far from perfect. Many utopian communities failed to live up to their promises of equality and freedom for women. Most communities instituted limited reforms; women were stuck doing the same work they had done in larger society; most were excluded from leadership; and many communities perpetuated demeaning stereotypes and false images of women.[1] Carol Kolmerton claims that utopia has "*always* been conceived as a male construct," with women acting more as appendages and secondary citizens than full and equal partners. This, she states, constitutes the real "failure" of utopian communities, not their financial difficulties or short histories.[2] Whether the Mormon and Icarian communities can be considered "failures" in this respect is less important than their rhetoric, the reforms they did enact, and the active role women in each community took to shape the community and control their own lives. Nauvoo became a site of contestation, and within their respective communities women actively challenged limiting notions of family, motherhood, labor and community.

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[1] Kesten, 94, 98.
[2] Carol A. Kolmerton, *Women in Utopia: the Ideology of Gender in the American Owenite Communities* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1990), 2, 11.

Women in Writing

Before understanding Mormon and Icarian women and their lived experiences in Nauvoo, we must first recognize the theoretical underpinnings of each community's views of women. A close reading of both communities' texts reveals disparate approaches by the two groups: while women were central to Icarian texts, they were marginalized and almost excluded from official Mormon writing. However, the marginalization and devaluation of women is reversed in the actual experience in the Nauvoo communities. Icarian women's circumscribed experience belied Cabet's focus on them in his writings, while Mormon women pushed far beyond their limited textual treatment to make great strides towards participation and equality within the community.

One of Cabet's primary selling points for Icarianism was the role and treatment of women in the community, or what Christopher Johnson calls his "apparent feminism."[3] Cabet devoted numerous articles in *Le Populaire* to the subject of women and even printed an entire pamphlet on the subject entitled "Woman, her unhappy lot in modern society, her happiness in the community," that went through nine editions and was seen by many as the "central aspect of his entire message."[4] Cabet was reacting to a social system in France that overlooked and oppressed women. Some of the main abuses he cites include the lack of educational opportunities for women of the lower classes, degrading and debilitating labor, prostitution, abortion and abuse by men. Women in the upper class are not immune from his criticism either. He condemns them as being vain and ambitious, but at the same time pities them as pawns in an elaborate social game in

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[3] Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 89.
[4] Ibid., 175.

which women with dowries are essentially bought and sold to garner fortune or social standing.[5] Cabet's censure of French society is largely accurate. In spite of the French Revolution and its proclamation of *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité*, women were still second-class citizens. The *citoyennes* of the French Revolution had little political power, and their lives were largely controlled by men. Working class women worked for much lower wages than men, and women of the upper class were still often forced into arranged marriages that considered neither the partners' ages or compatibility. Many fled to convents, where, Cabet states, enforced celibacy was anything but a fitting answer to society's problems.[6]

One of Cabet's primary stated purposes for his proposed social reforms is to save women from their "unhappy state." "Inequality of fortune" and the "detestable social organization" are the causes of all women's woes, as Cabet sees it. Society's proposed remedies, including the Church, with its "confession and penitence, its promise of paradise and threat of hell," Morality, with its precepts and sermons, and Justice with its prisons and appeals, offer nothing but false hope. Only *la Communauté* will guarantee the happiness of women. Cabet's proposed reforms, as stated in "La femme" and in *Voyage* include an economic system in which everything is held in common, a universal "perfect" education, the introduction of labor-saving machinery and the abolition of the dowry.

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[5] Étienne Cabet, "La Femme, son malheureux sort dans la société actuelle, son bonheur dans la communauté" (Paris: Bureau du Populaire, 1848), 6-11, Bibliothèque nationale de France, "Gallica," <<http://gallica2.bnf.fr/>>, 13 January 2009.

[6] Francis and Gontier, 196; Cabet, "La Femme," 12; "Community of Icarie" (London, Printed by F. I. Watson, 1847?), 3 in *Cooperative Communities*. For more on the condition of women in France see Samia I. Spencer, ed., *French Women and the Age of Enlightenment* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984); also Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996); Claire Goldberg Moses and Leslie Wahl Rabine, *Feminism, Socialism and French Romanticism* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993).

These changes, he claims, will not only assure the happiness of women, but they will ensure the future of society and the happiness of generations to come.[7]

Cabet's seminal work, *Voyage en Icarie*, presents "a paradise for women," where women are not only treated as equals, but worshipped. Equality for women infused every aspect of Icarian life and extended to education and the workplace: in the fictional Icaria there are women doctors, priests, judges, professors and even astronomers.[8] Labor is made easy and even pleasant by ingenious machines, allowing women time for leisure and educational pursuits. However, a closer look at Cabet's writings on women reveals subtle, yet important, contradictions embedded in the very foundations of Icaria. The remarkable equality between women and men in Icaria as illustrated in *Voyage* breaks down under close scrutiny. Cabet proclaimed equal education and opportunities for men and women, but his system for realizing that was based on segregation and an exaggerated sense of "separate spheres" that implicitly devalued women and their contributions to the community and denied them any real access to public power. There may be women professors, priests, and doctors in Icaria, but they work only with female clients. There are separate hospitals, courts, and churches for women in Icaria. Children in schools are separated according to sex and are taught by members of their own sex.[9]

According to Cabet, one of Icar's most important reforms in Icaria is the worshipping of women. *Voyage* teaches that one of men's primary duties is to honor, respect, and protect all women as a "divine species," upon which man's happiness

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[7] Cabet, "La Femme," 16-18; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 65, 81.
[8] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 82, 115, 134, 172; Piotrowski, 98-99.
[9] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 90, 114, 172; Bush, 424, footnote 18.

depends.[10] Cabet wished to elevate women by proclaiming them the object of worship, but this was always expressed in the vaguest terms: woman was an "angel," who must be "cherished," "adored," "beautified" and "made happy." Even while proclaiming women the objects of worship, Cabet concomitantly marginalizes women in his novel by portraying them as inferior prisoners of men's chivalry and worship. This worship and protection place women in a state of permanent dependency on men. Women cannot go into public unless escorted by men; they have no voice in government or public policy and thus become silent partners and sometimes prisoners to their fathers and husbands. Cabet declared that all legislation in Icaria was to ensure that women enjoyed the proper "gratitude, respect, affection, devotion, protection and care," but the only laws regarding women disenfranchised them and took their children away from their households.[11]

Compared to the volume of Icarian writings devoted directly or indirectly to women and their condition in Icaria, Mormon texts reveal little direct attention to women. While Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* contains several important female characters and devotes a significant number of pages to the topic of women, official Mormon texts, including the Book of Mormon, are almost silent on the topic. Mormon scripture names only fourteen different women: six in the Book of Mormon, five in the Doctrine and Covenants, and ten in the Pearl of Great Price. The Bible quotes numerous women, but the Book of Mormon records the words of three, the Pearl of Great Price contains the words of only one woman, Eve, and the Doctrine and Covenants contains no words by women.[12] Those

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[10] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 137; *Le Populaire*, 29 August 1847; Cabet, "Women in Icaria," *Popular Tribune*, 8 February 1851; Cabet, *Comment je suis Communiste*, 11.
[11] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 298; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 139-140; Cabet, "La Femme," 18.
[12] Lynn Matthews Anderson, "Toward a Feminist Interpretation of Latter-day Scripture," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 186; Melodie Moench Charles, "Precedents for

women who do appear in scriptural texts are almost always presented as subordinate to their husbands and sons who take precedence in the patriarchal order. Thus, Sariah, the first woman mentioned in the Book of Mormon, is known as the wife of the prophet Lehi and mother to the future prophets Nephi and Jacob. Moreover, the women mentioned are not subjects or agents but rather objects of male purposes and actions. For example, Sariah follows her husband's directive in leaving their home and journeying into the wilderness. Her only act of individual assertion is to complain against her husband and his supposed visions when she fears the death of her sons.[13]

Lived experience for both Mormon and Icarian women in Nauvoo differed widely from the experiences outlined or ignored in each groups' texts. The activities of men within the Nauvoo were both more visible and more valued than those of women. The men in both Mormon and Icarian Nauvoo had innumerable opportunities to participate actively in the community and to lay claim to an individual identity within a homogenizing environment. In the official capacity of the priesthood, Mormon men directed the church, ran the city, built the temple and traveled as missionaries, leaving their wives and children at home. Icarian men filled all administrative positions in the community and were the only members able to vote on admissions and constitutional changes. Men ran the workshops and conducted any trade or exchanges with people outside of the community. Women, both Mormon and Icarian, had considerably fewer avenues than their male counterparts to contribute in meaningful and recognizable ways to their communities. For the most part, women remained in the domestic sphere

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Mormon Women From Scriptures" in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, eds. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 48.

[13] Lynn Matthews Anderson, 187; The Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 5.

fulfilling the traditional household tasks, away from the public sphere that opened to receive their husbands, brothers and sons, often struggling against the patriarchal machine that circumscribed their sphere.

Marriage

The institution of marriage was one of the most important and most talked about social reforms in the Mormon and Icarian communities. Because of the profound and pervasive influence of the institution of marriage, many communities, such as the Shakers, the Perfectionists, the Mormons and Icarians, introduced new sexual and marital patterns in their communities. In his study of marriage and sexuality in utopian communities, Lawrence Foster declared that new marriage patterns were fundamental to the overall utopian agenda. The reason these new practices were introduced was to "establish a secure, conservative synthesis that would restore the relation of individual and community as an orderly, harmonious whole."[14]

While many nineteenth-century utopian reformers advocated a complete revolution in marriage and family relations, which was reflected in the layout of the community and in the nature of domestic space within the community, both Smith and Cabet were careful to preserve patriarchal authority in the family.[15] Smith radically reorganized the family in instituting polygamy, but he maintained the home as the

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[14] Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 227.

[15] Other communities who made radical reform in the area of marriage and family included the Harmonists or Rappites of Pennsylvania and the Shakers who practiced celibacy; John Noyes's Perfectionists practiced "complex marriage" which was a combination of polygamy and polyandry. For more information on sexual and marriage practices of various utopian communities in nineteenth-century America see Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States From Personal Observations* (New York: Dover, 1966). Also Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

dwelling place of the traditional nuclear family, consisting for the most part of father, mother and their children. Living arrangements in Nauvoo did vary widely, with extended families and friends often sharing the same home, but this was due more to the developing economy and infrastructure of Nauvoo than to the introduction of polygamy. Cabet, on the other hand, drastically changed the arrangement of the home and domestic space, but was much more conservative in introducing actual changes to the traditional institutions of marriage and family. These approaches had important implications for the eventual fate of both communities in Nauvoo.

The doctrine of plural marriage was outlined in a revelation to Joseph Smith that was recorded and read before the Nauvoo High Council in 1843.[16] He began instructing the Twelve Apostles in the doctrine in 1841, and he married his first plural wife, Louisa Beaman, on 5 April of that year, the day before the cornerstone-laying ceremony of the Nauvoo temple.[17] However, the doctrine of plural marriage was never publicly taught or advocated in Nauvoo and was practiced on a very limited scale, closely controlled by church leaders. According to church leader George Albert Smith's apparently accurate estimate, no more than two hundred, or just over one percent, of the twelve to fifteen thousand Mormon residents of Nauvoo knew of the 1843 revelation now canonized as section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The revelation was not publicly presented to and passed by general church membership until 1852, six years after the end of the

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[16] Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840-1910* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 32; Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith," M.A. Thesis (Purdue University, 1975), 211. There is evidence that Joseph had learned of plural marriage through revelation as early as 1831, but he delayed making the doctrine known. See Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:xxix.

[17] *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 256; Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804-1879* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 94.

Nauvoo era. The numbers of those actually practicing plural marriage in Nauvoo were equally limited, although reports on numbers vary widely. From Joseph Smith's first plural marriage in 1841 until his death in 1844 approximately twenty-eight men and 106 women participated in the practice. Most of these men married only one additional wife, although Smith and some of the other important leaders in the church married multiple women.[18]

Joseph Smith and others went to great lengths to keep the practice from public knowledge, including the maintenance of traditional living arrangements.[19] A large household containing the husband, several wives and all of their children that was notorious during the Utah period, simply was not seen in Nauvoo. Mormons tended to fit into patterns considered normal for Americans in their maintenance of the nuclear family and the patriarchal household.[20] The typical Mormon household consisted of single nuclear families—husband and wife, their children, and perhaps some extended family members—closely associating with each other in separate homes. Polygamous couples did not openly cohabit, and most family living arrangements in Nauvoo were what one would find anywhere else in the country at the time. Plural wives often continued living with their families. Nor did husbands accompany their plural wives to public events. One

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[18] "The Lord's Supper—Historical Reminiscences—The Puritans," *Journal of Discourses*, 14:213. George D. Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-1846: A Preliminary Demographic Report." *Dialogue* 27, no. 1 (1994): 33; Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 442; Gary James Bergera, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841-44," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 1, 46.

[19] Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 4; Bachman, 189-190, 197. The efforts at secrecy failed, as scores of newspaper articles attest. For example, see "Spiritual Wife System from Holy City, alias Nauvoo," *Warsaw (Illinois) Signal*, 8 May 1844 and 26 November 1845, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

[20] Moore, 29; Foster, 239; Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 101-102; "Remembering the Wives of Joseph Smith," << http://www.wivesofjosephsmith.org/home.htm >>, 31 July 2008.

exception was the case of sisters Emily and Eliza Partridge, both of whom were married to Joseph Smith. They moved in with the Smiths after their father died in 1840 under the guise of domestic help in the Smith home, which also served as a hotel.[21]

While Smith and other leaders did all they could to keep plural marriage a secret, news of the practice leaked into the Nauvoo community and surrounding areas. Smith knew that plural marriage would strain the fabric of the Mormon community at Nauvoo. His followers, steeped in American Protestant morality, would likely have seen the revelation as a breach not only of moral law, but of divine laws of chastity. The suspected and actual practices associated with the doctrine alienated some prominent members of the church who advertised the issue to stir up the already public distrust of Joseph Smith and the Mormons. Even some of Smith's closest friends and highest church authorities rebelled at the revelation. Sidney Rigdon, counselor in the First Presidency, was outraged when Joseph Smith proposed that he marry Rigdon's daughter Nancy. William and Wilson Law were other influential Mormons who refused to accept the practice. They actively publicized the issue and printed a newspaper, *The Expositor*, exposing and condemning the practice. The *Expositor* conflict indirectly led to the deaths of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum in Carthage in 1844. The disclosure of plural marriage and the disaffection of prominent Mormons only lent fuel to the fire raging against Mormons by non-members in the surrounding communities. Critics proclaimed that, "Smith and his coadjutors have propagated the doctrine, that a man may have *spiritual wives*–thus by a cunning stroke of priest-craft, throwing wide open the door for every species of

[21] Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 31.

licentiousness, that can disgrace or degrade a community."[22] Many used the issue to associate the Mormons with other radical social groups and condemn them by association.[23]

Polygamy became an issue that effectually split the Mormon movement. In the upheaval following the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, the practice of plural marriage was central to the debates and claims to authority in the church. Sidney Rigdon and James Strang, among the most vocal and successful claimants to Mormon authority, were openly opposed to the practice. One of the most vocal opponents among the Mormons was Joseph Smith's own wife, Emma, who struggled to accept the doctrine of plural marriage and her own husband's relationships to other women. She constantly vacillated, as in the case of Emily and Eliza Partridge, whom she agreed that Joseph could marry, and then changed her mind, forcing them out of her home.[24] Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Jeni Broberg Holzapfel suggest that Emma used the organization of the Relief Society to subtly combat the spread of plural marriage and to unite women under her own authority as president of the Relief Society against the authority of her husband and other church leaders advocating plural marriage.[25] At least partly because of polygamy, Emma Smith chose not to follow Brigham Young and the Saints west to Utah, and instead stayed behind in Nauvoo. She joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1860 when her son, Joseph Smith III became its prophet and president. While the RLDS church accepted many of the same doctrines and beliefs as

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[22] "Why Oppose the Mormons," *Warsaw Signal*, 24 April 1844.
[23] Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 7.
[24] "Remembering the Wives of Joseph Smith," << http://www.wivesofjosephsmith.org/home.htm >>, 31 July 2008.
[25] Holzapfel and Holzapfel, 110; Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, 61.

the mainstream Mormon church, it denied that Joseph Smith ever advocated or practiced plural marriage.[26]

The doctrine and practice of plural marriage did have some positive effects on the community at Nauvoo. Both men and women who participated in the practiced admitted that agreeing to plural marriage was a significant sacrifice, but it was one that increased commitment to the prophet and the community. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in her study on communities and commitment, asserts that, "The more it 'costs' a person to do something, the more 'valuable' he will consider it, in order to justify the psychic 'expense.'"[27] For the Saints, however, the principle of sacrifice was more than a social mechanism, but a spiritual imperative. Joseph Smith declared that, "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation."[28] Those who practiced plural marriage did so because they believed it a divine commandment from God and a necessary step to salvation in spite of an often strong personal aversion to the doctrine. John Taylor called it an "appalling thing"; Eliza Partridge considered it a "great trial"; and Brigham Young famously envied a corpse in its grave when confronted with the reality of having to accept plural marriage.[29] Many made it the subject of prayer, agreeing only after "special

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[26] "Community of Christ," <<http.www.cofchrist.org>>, 21 July 2008.
[27] Kanter, 76; Kathryn M. Daynes, "Mormon Polygamy: Belief and Practice in Nauvoo" in *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, eds. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 137-138.
[28] Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 28.
[29] Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias–the Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 310. For contemporary examples, see Sarah Pea Rich, Journal of Sarah De Armon Pea Rich, typescript, p.44, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "Helen Mar Whitney Reminiscences," 11; Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, Diary, 1846-1885, typescript, p.6, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; John Taylor quoted in Bushman and Bushman, *Building the Kingdom*, 63. Brigham Young declared "Some of these my brethren know what my feelings were at the time Joseph

manifestations," or what they considered divine confirmation of the doctrine. Sixteen-year-old Lucy Walker prayed all night about marrying Joseph Smith and at dawn finally "received a powerful and irresistible testimony of the truth of the marriage covenant called 'Celestial or plural marriage,'" after which she consented to become one of Joseph Smith's many wives.[30]

In addition to the tremendous spiritual significance of the commitment, polygamy also served important social ends, as Marvin S. Hill argues.[31] Many accepted it because of their implicit belief in Joseph Smith as God's chosen prophet and conveyor of divine will, and they entered into plural marriages to show loyalty and obedience to their prophet. Those who agreed to it were bound to Joseph Smith and to other loyal church members through expanding family ties and through sacred ritualized bonds that had temporal and eternal significance.[32] Kathryn M. Daynes claims that plural marriage, "with its sacred covenants and rituals superimposed on already strong moral obligations to family members" increased commitment to the church organization and to one's own family.[33] Moreover, polygamy defined the Saints as a peculiar people, setting them apart from outsiders. It served as a means of identification and distinction for the Saints and was a rallying point and means of cohesion in many of the same ways as their geographic

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revealed the doctrine [of polygamy]; I was not desirous of shrinking from any duty, nor of failing in the least to do as I was commanded, but it was the first time in my life that I had desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time. And when I saw a funeral, I felt to envy the corpse its situation, and to regret that I was not in the coffin, knowing the toil and labor that my body would have to undergo; and I have had to examine myself, from that day to this, and watch my faith, and carefully meditate, lest I should be found desiring the grave more than I ought to do." Quoted in Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 100.

[30] Elizabeth Ann Smith Whitney as quoted in Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 17, 202; "Remembering the Wives of Joseph Smith," << http://www.wivesofjosephsmith.org/home.htm >>, 31 July 2008.

[31] Marvin S. Hill, "Religion in Nauvoo: Some Reflections," 124-125.

[32] Bergera, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists," 4; Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 26-28; Devery S. Anderson, 148.

[33] Daynes, "Mormon Polygamy: Belief and Practice in Nauvoo," 142.

gathering. Plural marriage also reinforced commitment and cohesion within the Mormon community by giving believing husbands to women who otherwise may have had to marry outside the church.[34] The costs of entering plural marriage were clearly great, but for some of the Saints, the dividends to the individual and to the community in increased commitment, stability and personal faith were commensurate with their sacrifice.

Women were not passive pawns in plural marriages. Women entered into plural relationships willingly, aware of both the spiritual and material rewards associated with the practice. Because most of the men who practiced plural marriage were part of an elite body of leaders and priesthood holders, entering into plural marriage gave women increased social status and access to power within the community.[35] For single women such as Eliza R. Snow, who was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, plural marriage offered an avenue to social legitimacy and spiritual blessings that would otherwise be unavailable to them. They also received the financial benefits of being connected with prominent male members of the community. Even though few plural wives lived in the same house as their husband, the men still provided for their material needs; in the cash-scarce economy of Nauvoo this usually meant providing food and other necessary goods. Practicing polygamy also empowered women to take an active role in saving their family members. Helen Mar Whitney agreed to plural marriage when the prophet promised her that in doing so she would "ensure your eternal salvation and exaltation and that of your

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[34] Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 157-158; O'Dea, 60; Bushman and Bushman, *Building the Kingdom*, 65.
[35] Bergera, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists," 48.

father's household and all your kindred."[36] Finally, plural marriage strengthened the already existing bonds of female community among sister Saints as they shared in a secret and bore similar trials. For example, Elizabeth Durfee, one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, invited Emily and Eliza Partridge to her home to speak to them about plural marriage and served as a intermediary between Joseph Smith and the two sisters, who took comfort in the older woman's conviction and care.[37]

The radical nature of polygamy has captured the attention of many historians and has largely eclipsed another unique doctrine that was revealed in tandem with plural marriage—that of celestial marriage.[38] As the temple emerged from the trees on the bluff, Smith refined and openly taught during the Nauvoo period the possibility of family relations, including marriage, continuing after death through the sacred ordinance of celestial marriage, by which a man and a woman could be sealed, along with their children, as an eternal family unit.[39] This doctrine had a tremendous appeal for Smith's followers. Apostle Parley P. Pratt expressed his reaction to the new doctrine in his autobiography:

> It was at this time that I received from him [Smith] the first idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes in those inexpressibly endearing relationships which none but the highly intellectual, the refined and pure in heart, know how to prize, and which are at the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness. . . . It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate

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[36] Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 439.
[37] "Remembering the Wives of Joseph Smith," << http://www.wivesofjosephsmith.org/home.htm >>, 31 July 2008.
[38] The doctrines of both plural and celestial marriage are contained in what is now Section 132, The Doctrine and Covenants.
[39] The Doctrine and Covenants Section 132; M. Guy Bishop, "Sex Roles, Marriage and Childrearing at Mormon Nauvoo," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 36.

> these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore.[40]

This emerging doctrine sacralized family relationships and emphasized the importance of family ties as the basis for social order and development not only in this life, but also in the next. Joseph taught that men and women could only be saved together, bound together through celestial marriage performed in the temple.[41] Richard Bushman asserts that while women had formerly been marginalized objects in Joseph's previous revelations and writings, the doctrine of celestial marriage moved women to the center and made them active and essential players in a divine drama.[42] The revelation on marriage did not completely revolutionize the family order. For the most part, women remained firmly entrenched in their roles of wife and mother and continued to define themselves through marriage and motherhood. But through the doctrine of celestial marriage, these roles were endowed with eternal significance.[43]

Compared to the relatively radical practice of plural marriage among the Mormons, Cabet took a distinct approach to marriage and family in Icaria. Rather than rejecting marriage in favor of more radical marital and sexual practices as many utopians chose to do, Cabet elevated it by emphasizing its importance to the perfection of society. From the inception of Icarianism Cabet stressed the importance of marriage to the community and proclaimed that Icaria would be "the triumph of marriage and family."

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[40] Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr., "Book of Abraham Project," <<http:www.boap.org/LDS/Early-Saints/PPPratt.html>>, 24 July 2008.
[41] Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 5; Lawrence Foster, "From Frontier Activism to Neo-Victorian Domesticity: Mormon Women in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Mormon History* 6 (1979): 7; The Doctrine and Covenants 131:2-3.
[42] Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 444.
[43] Martha Sonntag Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space': Women's Engagement in Early Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27, no. 2, (Summer 1994): 69.

Cabet identified marriage as "the foundation of Icarian propaganda" for several reasons.[44] First, Cabet was aware of accusations of promiscuity and free love directed against other communities, and he sought to distance himself from any association with other communities, including the Mormons. "Critics accuse us of promiscuity of women," Cabet writes, "but, on the contrary, no system is more favorable to marriage and family than the Icarian system."[45] And nowhere was marriage more sacred, more respected, more revered than in Icaria, which, Cabet firmly believed, would prove to be the salvation of women and family.[46]

Secondly, for Cabet, marriage was a "small community," a microcosmic model for the ideal community because both were based on absolute equality, sharing and a sacred commitment. Marriage was more than a mere social institution; it was "a holy and sacred doctrine" and the *chef-d'oeuvre* of social organization.[47] Cabet often employed the marriage metaphor when speaking of the community. He encouraged his followers to call him Papa Cabet and to look on the community as a mother.[48] Cabet emphasized marriage to serve his own personal ends as founder and president of the community. This marriage metaphor underlined the supposedly indissoluble union created when one entered the community and served to underwrite Cabet's patriarchal authority. If marriage ensured only a relative equality and reinforced the husband's ultimate authority, Cabet's equation of the community and marriage reinforced his own ultimate authority within Icaria. As "Papa," Cabet had the final say in community affairs and could control even personal

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[44] Cabet, "Opinion icarienne sur le marriage," 5.
[45] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 207. See also Cabet, "La Femme"; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 167; *Revue Icarienne* 1856, vol. 1 no. 9, p.10; Cabet, "Opinion icarienne sur le marriage," 3-4.
[46] Cabet, "Opinion icarienne sur le marriage," 5.
[47] Ibid., 3; *La Colonie Icarienne*, 25 octobre 1854; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 140.
[48] Cabet, "Célébration à Nauvoo du septième anniversaire," 28-29.

decisions of community members. Because marriage was so important to the community, Cabet exerted personal control over marriages and included clauses on marriage in both the admission requirements and the Icarian constitution. For example, all unmarried persons were admitted to the community only after promising not to marry any persons "who have not the requisite qualities for admission." Members who were single upon their admission to the community had to promise to marry another Icarian as soon as the occasion presented itself.[49]

Finally, Cabet emphasized Icarian marriage in order to attract adherents, especially women, to his community. His system was an implicit critique of traditional marriages and the dowry system based on individual ownership and capital that victimized women and served largely economic and social ends. In contemporary French society, many people married purely for social and financial reasons, regardless of age, disposition or compatibility, making "love and harmony virtually impossibly in so many homes." He declared that marriage, as it existed in the modern world, was a state of slavery and must be transformed in order to realize an ideal society.[50] Such marriages prevented the equality, dignity and happiness of women because they were at the mercy of men and their financial arrangements. It also meant that a foundational institution was completely dependent on capitalism, thus tainting the entire superstructure of society that was founded upon marriage. Cabet claimed that "In Icaria the domestic ties, and first of all marriage, will exist in all their purity and all their force; . . . there will not be any

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[49] "Community of Icarie" (London: F.I. Watson, 1847?), 8, reprinted in *Cooperative Communities*; Prudhommeaux, 358.
[50] Cabet, "La Femme," 9; Étienne Cabet, "True Christianity," *Nauvoo Tribune*, 22 March 1854.

marriage portions [dowries]."[51] It was only through the abolition of dowries and the ensuring purity of domestic attachments that women could enjoy the equality, rights and dignity that she had been denied. Such marriages would, in turn, provide a stable foundation for the community at large. Marriage, as it would be practiced in Icaria, would ensure human dignity, maintain order, harmony and stability in the community and would be "the institution the most necessary for public peace, for order in the family, for the happiness of man and especially of woman."[52]

In spite of his insistence on the contrast between the depraved marriages of the capitalistic world and the enlightened, purified marriages that would ensure Icarian felicity, Cabet offered no clear idea on how this was to be accomplished except through the elimination of dowries and the practice of communism. He assumed that the resulting equality would allow women to choose their own partner with no ulterior economic or social goals. They would marry for love, thus promoting harmony within the marriage relation and in the community at large. His assumption that Icarian marriages would be relations of equality and happiness was an optimistic one and was contradicted by marital problems within the community, as we shall see.

Cabet's marriage reforms were not as liberal and liberating as he claimed. Cabet's emphasis on the equality fostered by the Icarian system of marriage was in fact a "relative equality" in which "the voice of the husband was preponderant" over that of the wife.[53] While women were consulted, men maintained ultimate responsibility and

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[51] "Community of Icarie," (London: F.I. Watson, 1847?), 3, reprinted in *Cooperative Communities*.
[52] *Revue Icarienne*, 1856, vol. 1 no. 9; Cabet, *Comment je suis communiste et mon credo communiste*, 7; Cabet, "Opinion icarienne sur le marriage," 3-4; Cabet, *Douze Lettres*, 7, 49-50, 52, 57.
[53] Community of Icarie" (London: F.I. Watson, 1847?), 5, in *Cooperative Communities*; Cabet, "Women in Icaria," *Popular Tribune*, 8 Feb 1851; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 299.

influence within marriage. Cabet's double standard of marital unity and ultimate male authority can be seen in his treatment of Icarian admissions. Cabet proclaimed the importance of equal devotion to Icarianism in both husband and wife, which was unusual in a day when men joined political and social movements with their wives in tow. "Husbands, obtain the consent of your wives. A husband who would leave in spite of his wife and knowing he would make her unhappy in abandoning her, would miss one of the first responsibilities of an Icarian, and does not merit the title Icarian, and would compromise as much as aid us. . . . The best is that true Icarians persuade their Wives in leaving with their children."[54] Women were encouraged to read and study Icarianism and to join the movement through their own volition, but Cabet included an important caveat by declaring that men admitted to Icaria were to display their "devotion to the community" by "guaranteeing that his wife has fulfilled all the conditions" of admission.[55] In Icaria men still exercised ultimate authority and were responsible for the conduct of their wives.

Cabet's insistence on marital unity and the husband's responsibility for his wife and family is ironic in light of Cabet's later statements and his own actions. Marriages and family relations in Icaria were hardly the perfect picture that Cabet sketched in his writings. In spite of Cabet's insistence that the family was a "sacred institution" and the "foundation of the community," in some cases Icarianism actually led to the breakup of

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[54] Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie.* 5eme livraison, 214.
[55] Étienne Cabet, *Icarian Community Conditions of Admission* (Paris: 1850, reprint, Nauvoo: Icarian Printing, 1854), 29, Gauthier Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

marriages.[56] Cabet himself did not follow his own dictates regarding marriage. Cabet had had a longstanding relationship with a woman named Denise Lesage with whom he had a daughter. He only married her as his public and political career began to accelerate in a bid for greater respectability. His wife and daughter accompanied him in his five-year exile in England, but they remained behind in Paris when he left for America. Cabet insisted that he left them behind because they had already suffered enough, and that he sacrificed his desire to be near them to his "devotion to the people."[57] Critics were quick to exploit this contradiction, and declared that his wife and daughter didn't believe in his system and so refused to follow him to America.[58] Some of Cabet's followers also left behind spouses when their pursuit of utopia led them to America. Contrary to his teachings on the importance of marriage and unity, Cabet praised one man who left his wife behind in France for his "courage and resolution"; he expected him to make "a good Icarian and useful member of the Colony."[59]

Spouses also went their separate ways after arriving together in Nauvoo. In August of 1850 Moquet's wife announced that she was leaving the community while her husband would remain. There were also several accusations of adultery or other inappropriate behaviors. In one case, "women F and P" accused "woman D and G" of holding hands while woman D should have been in the laundry. This resulted in an investigation and trial on charges of adultery. Divorce was considered only in extreme

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[56] Cabet, "True Christianity," *Nauvoo Tribune*, 4 July 1854; E. Fleury Robinson, "Nauvoo: A Social Experiment," in Dale R. Larsen, ed. *Soldiers of Humanity: A History and Census of the Icarian Communities* (USA: National Icarian Heritage Society, 1998), 67-71, originally published in *The Open Court Magazine*, Chicago, 28 August 1890.
[57] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 18, 20; Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 87, 91; Francis and Gontier, 223; also letter from Cabet to Krowlikowski, Nouvelle-Orléans, 27 janvier 1849, quoted in Prudhommeaux, 241.
[58] Prudhommeaux, 396, footnote.
[59] Autre lettre de Paris," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 4 octobre 1854.

cases, to protect women from "life-long tyranny," but Cabet believed that the enlightened state of marriage in Icaria would ensure women's happiness in marriage and preclude the necessity of divorce. In spite of Cabet's assurance, there were several documented cases of both separation and divorce within the community.[60] And even those marriages that remained intact were described by one observer as being "sad, monotonous and cloistral in character."[61]

Motherhood and Family

One of the primary reasons for the "sad, monotonous" tone in Icaria was the discontent of Icarian mothers. Family matters, especially motherhood, became one of the most conflicted and seriously disputed issues in the short life of the Icarian community in Nauvoo. Cabet championed himself as "the principle defender of the rights of women in France" and the greatest admirer, respecter, and protector of both womanhood and motherhood. In *Voyage* Cabet particularly focused on mothers as "benevolent deities" and guardians of the Republic.[62] He depicted families in intimate domestic settings, highlighting the warmth and closeness of family relations. Homes were places of comfort and companionship, and Valmor's family showcased in the novel spends much of their free time together, going on outings, attending cultural events or participating in lively discussions at home. More than one woman convert to Icarianism admitted that the

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[60] Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 100; Étienne Cabet, "Un jugement en Icarie"; Cabet, "Women in Icaria," *Popular Tribune*, 8 Feb 1851; *Cooperative Communities*, 5.
[61] M.A. Holynski, *Revue Socialiste* (Paris), September 1892, in Prudhommeaux, 313.
[62] Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 92; See also Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 75-77.

greatest appeal of Icarianism and the reason they joined the movement was the promised happiness of families and the future it offered their children.[63]

In reality, Cabet had a conflicted and complicated relation to women and mothers throughout the history of Icarianism. In spite of Cabet's elevated rhetoric regarding women, *Voyage* portrays motherhood as an asexual "public function," in which women become almost like Icaria's celebrated household machines, turning out children as their only real and tangible contribution to the community.[64] In real-life Icaria, Cabet proletarianized motherhood, emphasizing the importance of women's role in bearing and nursing children, but not allowing them to raise or nurture their children. In what he cast as a great concession, Cabet offered mothers two years' relief from labor in the workshops and fields of the community so they could nurse their children; in fact, Icarian law *required* that women nurse their children.[65] Cabet recognized that population growth through reproduction was essential to his communal goals, but even in his protection of mothers, Cabet seemed to resent them. In a detailing of the colony's workshops, Cabet includes a note on the *nourrices* or nursing mothers whose "number grows every day; it's a pity they only work for the future."[66] Cabet's respect for motherhood and childrearing degenerated into resentment, largely due to the difficult financial situation facing Icaria, where every worker was needed to ensure the mere survival of the community.

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[63] "Adresse de 200 Icariennes Lyonnaises," in Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*. 4eme livraison, 158.
[64] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 75; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 84, 112; Piotrowski, 99.
[65] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 75-77; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 619.
[66] Étienne Cabet, "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 16 au 22 juin 1850," Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, Folder 1, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Cabet extolled woman as the "mother and nurturer of mankind," but essentially denied women the role of mothers in Icaria.[67] Cabet's conflicted views on women and mothers is most clearly illustrated in the evolving Icarian legislation regarding the raising of children. Cabet did grant mothers two years of almost uninterrupted contact with their children, but this concession came with strings attached. One of the Forty-Eight Articles states that, "Without doubt the mother should have the right of nursing her child; but all the questions which relate to his physical, moral, and intellectual education concern the community." If mothers refused to formally consent to this condition, "they are not Icarians."[68] As Diana Garno points out, in exchange for two years with their children, mothers surrendered to Cabet the exclusive right to direct the upbringing of their children from then on.[69] Soon after their arrival in Nauvoo, the Icarians in the General Assembly voted to have all children live at the school. The measure was passed with only four dissenters; women could not vote. Parents were permitted to have dinner with their children on Sunday if the child behaved properly, and they "could even watch the children through the schoolyard fence during recess."[70] Cabet later declared that any member admitted to the community had to accept the condition that the community "have absolute control over children," and he further stated that this acceptance was "indispensable" to admission to the community.[71]

Cabet's reason for such strict separation and close control was that, "daily contact of children with their parents appears to be almost useless to children and to the society."

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[67] Cabet, "La Femme," 1.
[68] Etienne Cabet, "Forty-eight Articles," quoted in Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 876-877.
[69] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 619.
[70] Ibid., 493, 496; Prudhommeaux, 192-193, 334; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 151.
[71] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 200-201.

Cabet stated more clearly that interaction with their parents had "a contaminating influence" on young Icarians, and he particularly maligned mothers as corrupting their children.[72] His goal in creating the Icarian boarding school was to "remove children from the blindness of maternal love." Mothers' meddling instilled bad habits and should not be confused with maternal tenderness; it was the "greatest obstacle to the progress of the community."[73] Cabet essentially located women at the center of a crippling paradox: women could be Icarians, but they were deemed unfit and incapable of raising Icarian children. Cabet claimed this measure was for the good of the community and that he was motivated by as much "love, solicitude, and devotion for the Icarian children as if they were [his] own children." Cabet even went to far as forcing the children to call him "Papa" and stopping them from calling their parents *papa* and *maman*.[74]

Family was a critical axis in the community, and the radically altered domestic order introduced through mandatory boarding school was a sore point, especially for mothers, that had far-reaching implications for the Icarian community as a whole.[75] Icarians, both male and female, felt misled and betrayed as they compared the ideal close-knit family life as portrayed in *Voyage en Icarie* with the reality of breaking the bonds between children and parents. While on the surface Cabet championed the protection and promotion of the traditional nuclear family, his insistence on the removal of children from their parents' home to boarding school was in reality a profound challenge to the traditional family and to accepted notions of parental rights. The boarding school measure met with virulent opposition from members of the community and led to

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[72] Ibid., 201; Vallet 30.
[73] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 201-202, 225.
[74] Ibid., 225; *Le Populaire*, 11 July 1851 and 30 May 1851.
[75] Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 152.

outright defiance. One Icarian, Lacour, said that separating children from their parents "was taking the communist system too far."[76] One meeting of the General Assembly addressed two "grave infractions" committed by two fathers who, against regulation, kept their children with them during the night. The Widow Mareck, among others, left the community outright because she did not wish to be separated from her children. This measure raised opposition outside the community as well. The Catholic curé in Nauvoo preached a Sunday sermon accusing the Icarians of destroying the family because their children were in boarding school.[77]

While the bonds between parents and children were threatened within Icarianism, the reinforcement of those bonds in Mormonism was one of the principal reasons for the continued adherence of members. Mormon theology and especially temple ordinances taught that a very extensive sense of family relationships was foundational not just to earthly society and progression, but also to eternal progress and salvation. For the Saints of Nauvoo, views of marriage, motherhood and childrearing practices were shaped by the temple and by their ensuing perspective of eternity. The temple sealing ordinance performed over an altar on the top floor of the temple sealed a husband and wife together for "time and eternity" and ensured that their children and posterity would be part of their earthly and eternal family. The Mormon theology of family was closely related to the spatial doctrine of gathering. The temple ordinances served to gather families together across space and time, creating an unbroken chain from one's progenitors to one's latest posterity. Baptisms for the dead connected believers to their ancestors, and sealings tied

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[76] Rude, 45.
[77] "Assemblé Générale, Séance du 1er octobre" and "Retraites," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 25 octobre 1854; Francis and Gontier, 179.

spouses and children together. Family was fundamental to the entire Mormon agenda, and Mormons believed that the family rather than the individual was the primary unit of salvation and exaltation. As Lawrence Foster asserts, "to an almost unparalleled extent, the Mormon religion really was *about* the family; earthly and heavenly family ideals were seen as identical."[78] In spite of the difficulties of life faced at Nauvoo, including the high mortality rate, Mormon believers found solace and a reason to remain faithful in the hope of eternal blessings for families.

Motherhood in the Mormon community at Nauvoo gained weight from the notion of Republican Motherhood. Mormons recognized mothers' influence in the family. In an article entitled, "Influence of Women," in the Nauvoo newspaper, the author recognizes the "moral power of women." The article continues: "Upon [mothers] depends the earliest education and first impressions of their children. They regulate, or materially influence, the principles, opinions and manners of their husbands and sons. Thus the sound and healthful state of society depends on them."[79] But in addition to its social significance, motherhood had spiritual and eternal significance in the Mormon system. As Richard Bushman explains, through the temple and Mormon doctrines of family salvation, "procreation was lifted to the highest level of human and divine endeavor. Mothering was precisely what made 'gods.' And with mothering highlighted, the greatest work was . . . accomplished . . . at home, where women were present and central."[80] Mormon women in Nauvoo may have spent their time in largely the same activities as

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[78] Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 239; Shipps, *Mormonism*, 149.
[79] *The Nauvoo Neighbor*, 15 November 1843.
[80] Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 444.

other women, but their belief in Mormon doctrines of eternal families and temple ordinances gave new meaning to otherwise mundane roles.

Domestic Space

The nature of marriage and the family had tremendous implications for women's lived experience and the domestic space of Nauvoo. The key difference between the households of women in Icaria and in Mormon Nauvoo is found in what was missing. Mormon men were often absent from home, forcing or allowing women to assert a greater role and make concrete contributions to the community beyond what was traditionally considered the female sphere. In contrast, Icarian households consisted of only husband and wife as children were required to live at school. The collectivization of childrearing deprived women of one of their most fundamental identities as mothers, denied the validity and importance of mothering, and institutionalized the minimal valuation of women in the community.

Continual male absence was common in Mormon Nauvoo, and it led to the dissolution of the traditional division of household labor, leaving women not only as caretakers of their domestic sphere and household, but as "deputy husbands" who helped or assumed male duties as providers and spiritual leaders as well.[81] The absence of men was due to three different factors, two of these unique to Mormonism. First, Nauvoo was located on a swampy bend in the Mississippi River where mosquitoes and malaria flourished and the mortality rate was high. During the Mormons' residence in Nauvoo

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[81] Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650*-1750 (New York: Knopf, 1982); Carol Cornwall Madsen, "'Femme Covert': Journey of a Metaphor," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 53.

nearly two thousand people died. The national mortality rate at the time was 13.5 deaths per thousand. Estimates of Nauvoo's death rate ranges from 19.5 to 26 per thousand. Deaths were so frequent in the earliest years in Nauvoo that Mormon authorities preached a general funeral sermon every Monday and Thursday. Widows were abundant.[82] Secondly, the Mormon population had already been affected by the violence in Missouri preceding the foundation of Nauvoo. Men died from exposure and sickness incident to being expelled from their homes in the middle of winter or were killed outright by mobs, leaving many women alone. Finally, women were often left alone because husbands left to attend to church duties, including serving in distant missions. The Quorum of the Seventy, which was the main missionary body at the time, grew to include 2,400 members by 1846. Although some of these seventies would have been young single men, most were married and would have left behind wives and children as they traveled to preach the gospel.[83]

Because of the absence of men and the difficult economy in Nauvoo, Mormon women chose or were forced to extend their traditional skills, to enter the public sphere and to earn cash. Women used traditional female domestic skills such as sewing, millinery and braiding straw hats to supplement the family income or to support themselves and their families.[84] Women's responsibilities extended into what was traditionally the male sphere as well as they cared for animals, raised gardens and built

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[82] See Guy Bishop, Vincent Lacey, and Richard Wixom, "Death at Mormon Nauvoo, 1843-1845," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 19 (Fall 1986): 71-77; George and Sylvia Givens, *Nauvoo Fact Book*, 77; Backman, 12; Lee Groberg, *Sacred Stone: Temple on the Mississippi.*

[83] Information given at tour of Seventies Hall in Nauvoo, October 2006.

[84] Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 7, 9; Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Nauvoo Neighborhood: A Little Philadelphia or a Unique City Set upon a Hill?" in *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisited: Nauvoo in Mormon History*, eds. Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 74.

homes. Bathsheba Smith wrote to her husband, missionary George A. Smith, that, "I have got my corn and fodder secured, broom corn, sunflower seed and beans likewise. Melissa [her younger sister] and me did it."[85] Eunice Shurtliff dug thirty bushels of potatoes, collected debts, and killed eight hogs while her husband was absent on a mission.[86] Drusilla Dorris Hendricks, whose husband was left an invalid after the Battle at Crooked River, chinked and plastered her chimney with the help of another sister. She raised a "good garden" and "made beer and ginger bread to go out on public days" to sell them. She paid their tithing by knitting and selling mittens.[87] Women even built their own homes. When Louisa Barnes Pratt's husband left on a mission, she was left in a miserable log cabin. During his three-year mission to the South Pacific she bought lumber on credit and built a frame house. She wrote that she was earning a reputation as "a punctual business woman."[88] The activities of these and other Mormon women show that while they were characterized ideologically as helpmeets to their husbands and male leaders of the church, in practical terms they produced goods for the market, bartered and were solely responsible for long periods for the economic wealth of their households.

The nature of the Icarian household was controlled by Cabet and essentially defined by the absence of children in the home. Every Icarian family (which in this case meant husband and wife as children were housed at school) occupied the same amount of physical space—two rooms in an apartment building. They were also allowed the same

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[85] Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, 123.
[86] Diary of Luman Andros Shurtliff, typescript, pp.58-59, L Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
[87] Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 165; Holzapfel and Holzapfel, 36. The Battle of Crooked River was a skirmish between the Mormons and the Missouri State militia on 25 October 1838. It was a primary point of conflict between the Mormons and the State of Missouri and led to the famous "extermination order." See *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 199-200.
[88] Quoted in Vicky Burgess-Olson, *Sister Saints* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1978), 46.

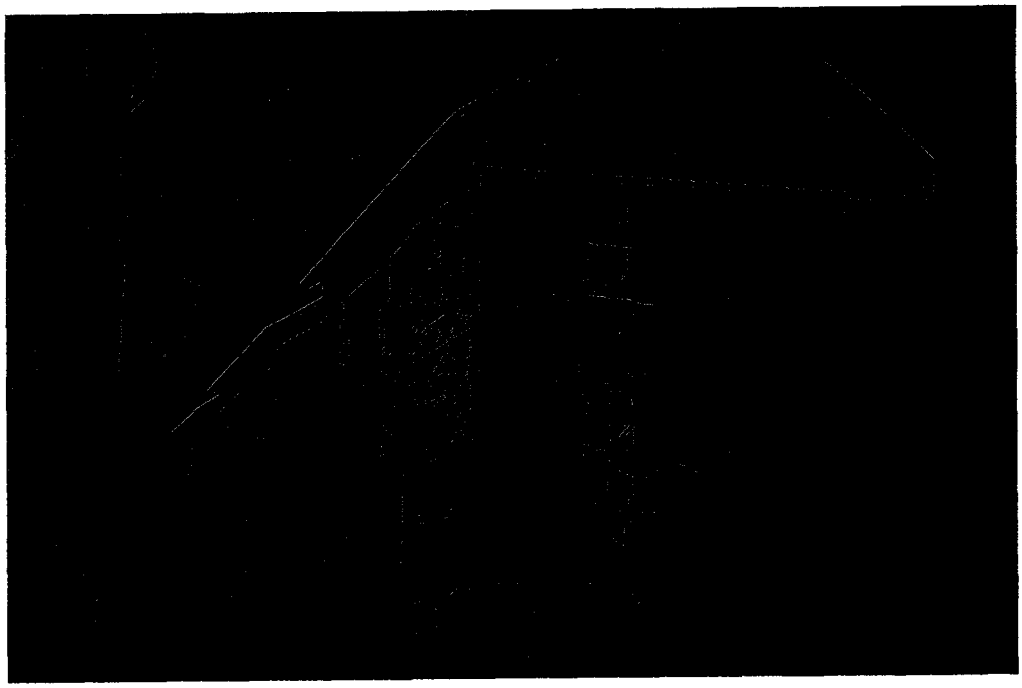

Figure 28 Icarian Apartment Buildings. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

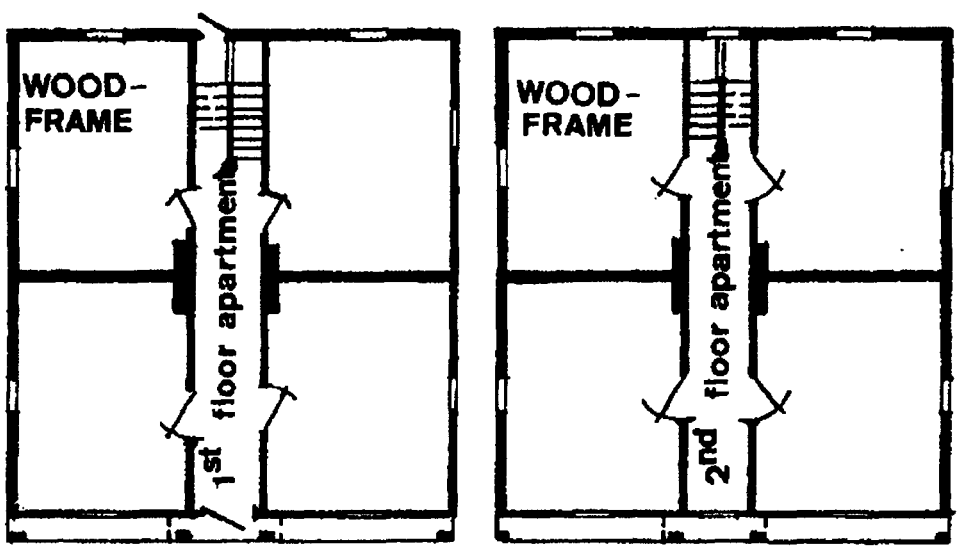

Figure 29 Floorplan of Icarian Apartments. Reprint of Rogers, 121.

amount and kind of furniture. (Furnishings included a bed made of white pine, a heavy padded wooden chair, a small wooden table, and other small items such as a shelf, a tub, a candlestick, a mirror, a broom and a bucket.) Members could not keep anything that would lead to inequality or distinctions between members, and they were not allowed to have anything not possessed by all other members of the community.[89] One woman, wishing to keep a child's cradle because of its sentimental value, was criticized and forced to give the cradle to the directors. The absence of children and the required uniformity in housing denied women the jurisdiction over the traditionally female sphere of the home and instead gave control to male leaders of the community.[90] Homes thus became impersonal spaces where people lived rather than reflections and expressions of individual personalities, values and tastes.

While Mormon women were able to extend their influence and activity outside the walls of their homes, Icarian women remained firmly entrenched in the domestic sphere and continued doing the same labors they had performed before joining the community (with the important exception of childrearing), just on a larger scale. One of Cabet's stated goals in Icaria was the collectivization of domestic labor, but it remained sex-segregated and largely invisible. Much of women's labor within the home was moved to ateliers and performed on a community-wide level rather than in individual households. All meals were taken in common, which meant women did not cook for their own family. Women still performed labors such as sewing, cleaning and pressing clothing; they were simply moved out of the home into the women's *ateliers*. The

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[89] Sutton, "An American Elysium," 282-283; Rude, 149-150; Rogers, 43, 122; Lisle G. Brown, "Nauvoo's Temple Square," 8; Vallet, 24, 29; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 70.
[90] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," v.

communal nature of Icaria meant that instead of doing laundry and cooking for her own family, women in Icaria became responsible for clothing and feeding the entire community. Cabet seems conveniently to overlook that women in the real Icaria were trapped in the same work they had always performed, but in Icaria they are simply performing them on a much larger scale. Under the Icarian system, the nuclear family and the household were no longer separate, identifiable units of economic production with women playing a central and recognizable role. Because Icarianism devalued and even vilified the traditional household, the nuclear family and especially motherhood, women's domestic labor and their important, but largely invisible, contributions to the community were easily devalued and overlooked.

Women of both communities engaged in work that was largely sex-segregated and traditionally classified as feminine—reproductive labor that included not only bearing children, but performing the tasks that ensured survival such as providing and cooking food, manufacturing various items needed by the family, care and cleaning of the home, and supervising and nurturing children.[91] For both Mormon and Icarian women, gender continued to function as a central category through which their lived experience was mediated. However, there existed important differences in the experiences of Mormon and Icarian women that not only affected the lives of individual women but the nature and fate of the communities as a whole. Through their labors both inside the home and within the community at large, Mormon women extended their influence and made tangible contributions to the community that were recognized and validated by the larger

[91] For more on the traditional division of labors in early nineteenth-century America see Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York, Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990); Ruth Schwartz Cohan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (Canada: Harper Collins, 1985).

community. Labor for Icarian women, on the other hand, was collectivized, limited and even, in some cases, vilified. While women in both communities performed much the same work they had performed on the outside, the differing valuation and extent of these labors determined in great measure women's contribution and satisfaction in the community and the overall success of each group.

Marginalization vs. "Equal Rights"

The Icarian movement began auspiciously for women. Initially, Icarianism enabled women to be equal and active participants in a social and political movement of tremendous significance. During its formative years in France Icarianism generated great hopes among women. Countless women wrote letters extolling the Icarian system, which were then published in the Icarian paper. Cabet's disciple Charles Krowlikowski remarked that, "All the letters that arrive show much sympathy and enthusiasm, especially on the part of women."[92] Cabet encouraged women to participate actively in Icarianism, and that participation included important public involvement in the movement. Women attended Icarian meetings along with their husbands and children to discuss the problems facing society and their possible remedies. Moreover, women participated as formal speakers in these events, something that almost never happened in Mormon society in Nauvoo. Cabet's wife at one point even assured those women who

[92] Charles Krowlikowski, "Letter to Très cher M. Cabet, 12 septembre 1847," microfilm of SIU Cabet papers, roll 2, Cabet Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

awaited their departure from France to Icaria in America that they would soon be able to vote.[93]

The early hopes of Icarian women were soon crushed between the cold facts of the Icarian constitution and the cruel reality of Icarian life in Nauvoo. The Icarian constitution codified inequality and injustice that were only hinted at in *Voyage*: "All have the same part in Sovereignty; the same right to make the Constitution and Laws; all are equally *electeurs* and eligible for all the public functions, at the age fixed by law."[94] The French masculine noun *electeurs* can be understood to include people of both sexes, but Cabet later clarified in his Statement of intent to incorporate the Icarian Community that, "The female *corporators* shall have no vote, but in all other respects have all the rights of male corporators." Cabet attempted to ameliorate the apparent gender discrimination by declaring that women had a "consultative voice," especially in matters "that particularly concerned them."[95] Cabet not only allowed, but required women to attend the regular meetings of the General Assembly in Nauvoo even though they could not vote in these meetings. Women's attendance at the meetings was apparently to witness the wisdom and applaud the decisions of the men and also to acquaint them with the laws and regulations under which they were to live.[96]

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[93] *Le Populaire*, 13 November 1842; Cabet, *Almanach Icarien*, 183; Christopher H. Johnson, *Utopian Communism in France*, 173; Cabet, *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 7ème livraison, 331; Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, viii. Women in Icaria were not able to vote until 1878. The issue of women voting was a major issue in the split between the "Progressives" and the "Conservatives" in the Corning community in 1877-1878 and eventually led to the creation of a breakoff community known as Young Icaria. Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 129-132.

[94] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 57.

[95] Étienne Cabet, "Statement of intent to incorporate the Icarian Community, Sep 1850, Nauvoo," emphasis mine, Illinois State Historical Library Collection, Folder 1, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Étienne Cabet, "The Law relating to the General Assembly of the Icarians," *Popular Tribune*, 8 Feb 1851; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 62-63.

[96] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 177, 191, 193-194; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 116, 127.

The most glaring discrepancy in gender equality was enacted in the most important public space in Icaria, the refectory, which was the location of meetings of the General Assembly. The meetings held in the refectory reinforced through spatial arrangement and ritual the marginalization, disfranchisement and silencing of half of the Icarian population. The meetings of the General Assembly were a tacit lesson in the social order that existed in Icaria and the proper place of women within the implicit Icarian hierarchy. During meetings of the General Assembly, the tables in the refectory were pushed against the walls and the benches arranged in a semi-circle around the elevated desk of Cabet, who directed and presided over the meeting as the president and ultimate authority in Icaria. Seated in order on the benches were the male members of the community at Cabet's left, the provisional male members (young men not old enough to vote and those male members who had not been in the community long enough to be admitted as full members), with the women on the right.[97] The meetings visually and spatially represented and reinforced women's status as lesser members of the community. Women were called full members, but in practice were put below the level of those male members only provisionally admitted. Unlike the new male members who eventually became full members of the community, women were stuck in a kind of perpetual provisional status, seated separately in meetings with no official voice in the community.[98]

The *Icariennes* did not quietly acquiesce to this exclusion. Pierre Bourg, the newspaper editor, referred to an "incident" related to the question of elections that arose

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[97] Cabet, "Célébration à Nauvoo du septième anniversaire," 9-10; Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 112.
[98] Sutton, "*Voyage to Icaria*: A Message to the World," 20.

approximately one year after the Icarians' arrival in Nauvoo. Bourg described this incident as a "delicate" war waged by the *citoyennes* of the community for "absolute political equality." Women "wanted to be electors and eligible for all the public functions, even for the *gérance*."[99] This is apparently the only place such conflict is mentioned, and as women did not receive a legislative voice in Nauvoo, it seems that Cabet quickly and effectively stifled the opposition.

Gender differences and the marginalization of women had a defining influence on the nature of the Icarian community and quite literally drew a dividing line through the community. While Cabet constantly extolled equality of the sexes, Cabet's theories about gender equality rested on a strict conservative code of separation; in theory and in practice he conflated gender equality with segregation, assuming that if women had separate but equal facilities, they were therefore equal to men. Cabet cloaked the inequalities and female marginalization inherent in his system in terms of "the natural differences" between the sexes.[100] Cabet's belief in the natural differences of the sexes and the importance of segregation was centered in the schoolhouse the Icarians constructed from temple stones. The school, which was Cabet's pet project and the "miniature model of a complete community," was built around the segregation of the sexes and the notion of separate spheres.[101] These notions and practices extended both spatially and socially through the rest of the community as seen in the refectory, the separate workshops, and the exclusion of women from leadership positions and from contacts outside the community.

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[99] Quoted in Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, v.
[100] Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 28.
[101] M.A. Holynski, *Revue Socialiste*, September 1892, quoted in Prudhommeaux, 335.

Like the *Icariennes*, Mormon women were also faced with marginalization that was visually evident and spatially enacted in church meetings. Before the completion of the temple, meetings were conducted in groves with an elevated stand erected at the front surrounded by rough benches. Women were excluded from representation on the stand and did not speak in official meetings.[102] One visitor to Nauvoo mentioned that, "The Prophet stood upon an elevated platform of boards, with 12 of his elders seated behind him."[103] Anne Hughlings Pitchforth, a British convert to Mormonism, offered a further description of an outdoor general conference in which she mentioned that the twelve apostles at the center were surrounded by the congregation in which women and men were divided.[104] The hierarchy of the church and priesthood authority were represented even more graphically in the large assembly hall on the first floor of the temple where general church meetings were held after 1842.[105] When completed, the immense room was flanked on each end by tiered pulpits, representing the order and authority of the priesthood. Only men occupied these elevated seats and spoke from the pulpit, while women sat in the congregation.

As evidenced in the organization of Mormon church meetings and in the structure of the temple, Mormon church organization was patriarchal, marginalizing women and relegating them to helping roles. The priesthood, or authority to lead the church and act in the name of God, was reserved uniquely for worthy male members of the church. Priesthood authority implied male control both in the institutional structure of the church,

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[102] For a detailed description of a Mormon meeting see Aitken, 35.
[103] Leon, 536.
[104] Quoted in Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 151.
[105] The Saints first met in the temple on 30 November 1842; the walls were about four feet above the basement, the temple was not yet enclosed, but a temporary floor was installed to allow church meetings within the edifice. See Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:182.

in the family and in society as a whole. Church leaders such as George Albert Smith and Heber C. Kimball taught that, "The woman ought to be in subjection to the man." John Taylor asserted that, "The Sisters ought not to gather together in schools to pray unless their husbands, or some man be with them."[106] Moreover, women did not speak in public meetings in Nauvoo. Even Emma Smith, wife of the prophet, who was commanded in an 1830 revelation to "expound scriptures and exhort the church," was later instructed "to teach the *female* part of the community." The one exception I found to women speaking in public was in the October 1845 conference when Brigham Young invited Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the prophet, to address the congregation, and she spoke at length of her experience as a "mother in Israel."[107] Priesthood and leadership positions in the church located men at the center of life in Nauvoo and meant that women acted and contributed only outside of formal church organization.

However, many Mormon women were unwilling to accept passively the limited role they were prescribed. They found ways to assert their own identity and overcome (to a certain extent) their marginalization in the community, which is one of the primary differences between the women of the Mormon and Icarian communities. For example, Mormon convert Louisa Pratt recorded, "Last evening the ladies met to organize. . . . Several resolutions were adopted: first, resolved that when the brethren call on us to attend prayers, get engaged in conversation and forget what they called us for, that the sisters retire to some convenient place, pray by themselves and go about their business.

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[106] *Journal of Heber C. Kimball*, book no. 90-93, 87.

[107] The Doctrine and Covenants 25:7; "Minutes of the Relief Society, verbatim from the original record taken at Nauvoo, Illinois, 1842-1844," 17 March 1842, p.24, emphasis mine, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. For accounts of Lucy Smith's address see Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:471-472; Ronald W. Walker, "The Historian's Corner: Lucy Mack Smith Speaks to the Nauvoo Saints," *BYU Studies* 32, nos. 1, 2 (1992): 278.

Second, if men wish to hold control over the women, let them be on the alert. We believe in equal rights."[108] Mormon women like Louisa Pratt were not afraid to assert their power and claim equality in the Mormon movement. These women achieved integration and participation primarily through female communities, both informal and formal, and through the temple rising on the hill.

Informal female communities in Nauvoo were similar to those in society at large; they were created first through common female rituals of births and deaths, nurturing and caring for others. Women connected with others women as sisters, mothers, daughters, nurses and midwives. One of the reasons for the intensified female bonding among Mormon women was the frequent absence of men.[109] Women visited each other to get news of their own family members who were away. Bathsheba Smith wrote to her absent husband George A. Smith, that, "When I get a letter first all the rest come to hear it. The brethrens' wives have all been to see me this week."[110] For Mormons, this "female world" was given added cohesiveness through their common belief and shared commitment to what they believed was the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.[111] As Nauvoo midwife Patty Session noted, women would gather in informal groups for prayer and spiritual edification, creating social as well as spiritual connections.[112]

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[108] Kate Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1947), 8:239; Database on-line, Nauvoo Family History Center, Nauvoo, Illinois.
[109] Madsen, *In their Own Words*, x, 217; Madsen, "'Femme Covert,'" 59. See also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-century America" *Signs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1975): 1-29; "Minutes of the Relief Society," August 13, 1843; Holzapfel and Holzapfel, 46-48.
[110] Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, 127.
[111] Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 30; Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, 2.
[112] Patty Sessions," *Women's Exponent* 13 (November 15, 1884): 94-95; Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 17-19; Holzapfel and Holzapfel, 59.

These small networks of women that began with families and neighbors soon spread to create citywide collectives that supported and sustained the fabric of the church in Nauvoo. These pervasive informal female networks led in 1842 to the creation of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, the formalized female organization of the church. The Relief Society had its genesis in the temple, as women sought ways to participate in its construction. Several women gathered together and asked one woman, Eliza R. Snow, to draw up a constitution and by-laws, which were then submitted to Joseph Smith. He read the constitution, stated that it was the best he had ever read, and then added, "But this is not what you want. Tell the sisters their offering is accepted of the Lord, and He has something better for them than written constitution. Invite them all to meet me and a few of the brethren in the Masonic Hall over my store next Thursday afternoon, and I will organize the sisters under the Priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood."[113] Smith thus incorporated the female community into the institutional organization of the church and brought it under the authority of the priesthood. Through their status as an official auxiliary church organization, the Relief Society, women were able to maintain their own organization and identity, and their integration as an official church institution allowed them a sense of significance, inclusion and legitimacy in the larger project of community building. This independence of action under the aegis of the priesthood organization reveals the balance of female participation within patriarchal control that was important to the Mormon movement in Nauvoo. Joseph Smith sanctioned the Relief Society, and in turn the women of the Relief Society supported him in his role as prophet and president of the church and sustained the church and community he had created.

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[113] Barrett, 505.

This transition from an informal grassroots organization to an official church program sanctioned by the prophet was an important one, and it offers a significant contrast to the Icarians. What Cabet did not or could not understand was the importance of balance between women's traditional roles and reform. Cabet was fearful of women's potential subversive influence. The potential of women to unite and undermine his personal agenda for Icarianism was exacerbated by sex segregation within the community. Women working together would create the very networks Cabet feared. To prevent women's too close association, Cabet enacted regulations enforcing silence. Women were to work in silence in the female workshops, and overseers reported any infractions to Cabet. Icarians also ate their meals in silence under the close supervision of Cabet. Furthermore, women were reduced to silence in the official legislative meetings of the General Assembly and had no official voice in the community.[114] In enforcing such strict measures, Cabet used his patriarchal authority to override the effects of female spaces and effectually prevented the formation of female networks, not allowing for them either to compromise or uphold the tenuous formal fabric of the community. He also eliminated many of women's avenues to contribution within the community, institutionalizing their status as second-class citizens in a community ostensibly dedicated to equality.

What Diana Garno terms Cabet's "gendered myopia" is evident in the discrepancies between theoretical Icarianism and women's actual lived experience in

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[114] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 137; Étienne Cabet, "Compte rendu," *Revue Icarienne*, 1855, Vol 1, no 6, Iowa State Historical Society Collection, Box 3, Folder 2, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

Icaria.[115] While Cabet wrote about equality and opportunity for women in marriage, education and community, *Icariennes* were actually discounted and marginalized in the community. Many women embraced Cabet's promises of female reform, but, unlike Cabet, they saw those reforms as enhancing rather than negating their traditional and fundamental identity as wives and especially as mothers. Under Cabet's system, women had to relinquish claim to their identity as mothers, homemakers and producers to be true Icarians. Cabet's insistence on absolute paternal authority displaced mothers and forced them to give up jurisdiction in traditional feminine spheres, especially that of childrearing, compelling them eventually to choose between devotion to their children and allegiance to Icarianism.[116] In the end, they found the exchange disappointing, and many of them left to find fulfillment elsewhere. In a system that limited their participation, overlooked their contributions to the community, and denied their traditional roles, women's primary outlet and expression of individualism was through leaving the community.

Women's conversion to and participation in the communities at Nauvoo were profound formative experiences. Their identity as Mormons and Icarians defined them as women, it structured their family and community, and it provided the motivation for much of what they did during their years in Nauvoo. The act of being converted to a new religion and accepting a contested social system was an important act of self-assertion and subjectivity that allowed these women to stabilize their lives and lay claim to their own identity and salvation. For Mormon women, conversion was followed by absorption into a community of believers that gave women a collective identity in addition to their

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[115] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," iii.
[116] Ibid., v.

own personal identity and allowed them avenues, especially through the temple and the Relief Society, to participate in a movement they believed had eternal significance.[117] Icarian women had similar experiences and benefits in joining the Icarian movement. They too asserted their agency when joining Cabet's highly contested social movement in France. Many of them evidenced their agency and newfound identity in writing letters to Cabet, attending Icarian meetings, and publicly supporting the movement. They, too, enjoyed a meaningful collective identity as *Icariennes*, a title that they adopted and bore proudly. But this agency and activity diminished after the early years in France and was tightly circumscribed in Nauvoo. Their very real sacrifices and contributions to the community were overlooked. Denied traditional roles and avenues of exercising their agency, they reasserted their power through dissent and departure from the community, seriously crippling the Icarian movement.

The spatial and social marginalization or inclusion of women has important implications for ongoing women's history and utopian history. Martin Buber asserts that a community is a circle that is defined, not by the points along its circumference, but by the radii extending out from the center.[118] Both the Mormon and Icarian communities relegated women to the margins of society, thus weakening the overall cohesive force of the community. Through the unique Mormon doctrines centered on the temple and through their own efforts, Mormon women were able to reaffirm their connection to the center, and in doing so assert their own identity and contribute to the overall cohesion of their community. Icarian women were less successful, and the continued marginalization

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[117] Madsen, *In their Own Words*, x-xi, 29, 40; Bradley, "'Seizing Sacred Space,'" 66.
[118] Buber, 135.

of half of the community members weakened the bonds holding Icaria together until the community finally dissolved.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE NAUVOO

On 13 June 1844, Illinoisans at an anti-Mormon meeting held at Warsaw, Illinois adopted the following resolution: "We hold ourselves at all times in readiness to co-operate with our fellow citizens . . . to exterminate, utterly exterminate the wicked and abominable Mormon leaders, the authors of our troubles. . . . Resolved, that the time, in our opinion, has arrived, when the adherents of Smith, as a body, should be driven from the surrounding settlements into Nauvoo."[1] Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered days later at the county seat at Carthage. By the autumn of 1845, over one hundred Mormon farms and homes around Nauvoo had been burned, prompting the formation of a committee to negotiate a settlement between the Mormons and their neighbors. The Mormons agreed to leave the state "as early next spring as the first appearance of thrifty vegetation."[2] Increasing hostilities forced the Mormons to leave earlier than expected, and in the middle of a freezing February, the Saints began crossing the Mississippi River to the west, beginning an exodus of over twelve thousand Saints from Nauvoo and its environs.[3] Mormon convert Lewis Barney recorded his feelings on leaving Nauvoo: "On reaching the summit between the Mississippi and Des Moines Rivers the company made a halt for the purpose of taking a last piercing look at the

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[1] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:464.
[2] Brigham Young, "Epistle to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Scattered Abroad through the United States of America," Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:479.
[3] Leonard, 574; David Roberts, "The Brink of War," *Smithsonian* (June 2008): 48.

Nauvoo temple, the spire of which was then glittering in the bright shining sun. The last view of the temple was witnessed in the midst of sighs and lamentations, all faces in gloom and sorrow bathed in tears, [from] being forced from our homes and temple that had cost so much toil and suffering to complete its erection."[4] Barney's record of his departure from Nauvoo was only one of many; most written records of the Saints' departure focus on their last glimpse of the temple before they turned west to find a new home.

Figure 30 Mormons Crossing the Mississippi on the Ice. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* April 1853.

The Icarian enterprise at Nauvoo ended quite differently from the Mormons'. After months of internal conflict, the Icarian community at Nauvoo formally expelled Étienne Cabet and his supporters on 27 September 1856. Cabet's response to his

[4] Lewis Barney, "Life Sketch." Land and Records Office, Nauvoo, Illinois.

expulsion from his own community: "It is finished." The recent "civil war" in Icaria had ended after "inhuman barbarity" and "incredible infamies" with the victory of the "oppressors." Cabet announced his intention to leave the community almost immediately and to move to St. Louis, "in order there to realize completely the separation and there to begin anew the community under the name of Icaria." He promised to build up the new Icaria and called for faithful Icarians to "get ready, prepare yourselves to come and join us."[5] By Friday, 6 November 1856, Cabet and 179 of his followers had settled in three rented houses in St. Louis. Three days later Cabet was dead, having suffered a massive stroke. The 221 Icarians remaining in Nauvoo decided to follow Cabet's original plan of relocating to Corning, Iowa. They liquidated all of their assets in Nauvoo, and in January 1858, the first of the Icarians crossed the Mississippi and followed the Mormon trail to Adams County, Iowa where they built a new Icaria.[6]

The Mormons and Icarians arrived in Nauvoo with great hopes and plans, but both left the city after only a few years. As we have already seen, the reasons for each group's departure were multiple and complex, but they were grounded in spatial concerns. The Mormons' expulsion from Nauvoo was mostly the result of outside hostility and conflict. The Mormons' success in building a vibrant community, the towering temple, and their clearly demarcated identity as Saints created a strong sense of community among believers, but it concomitantly alienated and provoked their neighbors. While there were some internal tensions, pressures from outside the

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[5] *Nouvelle Revue Icarienne* (St. Louis), 12 October 1856, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; Étienne Cabet, "Adresse du citoyen Cabet aux Icariens en France sur la séparation et le départ for St. Louis," in Étienne Cabet, *Départ de Nauvoo du fontadeur d'Icarie avec les vrais Icariens* (Paris: 3 rue Baillet, 1856), 20-21.
[6] Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 116-117.

community eventually forced the Mormons to abandon Nauvoo and start again in the West. The Icarians, on the other hand, never realized the success of the Mormons in building a vibrant community or in creating a strong spatial statement in their community. This meant that they provoked less external conflict and persecution than the Mormons, but, on the other hand, they were unable to benefit from a strong spatial and ideological center that united the community. The Icarian community eventually fractured from within, and the remaining fragments were left to find their own way in other locations.

The two communities at Nauvoo represent two different attempts to resolve what Rosabeth Moss Kanter identifies as a fundamental paradox in utopian communities. Like other utopian groups, Mormons and Icarians depended on isolation, both geographic and ideological, to insulate them from outside forces that were threatening or destructive to their individual utopian agendas. But at the same time, the success of these utopian communities was dependent on interaction with the outside world: "They had to be close enough to civilization to proselytize new recruits and to demonstrate the superiority of their way of life to that of the cities which they denounced. But they could not risk being overrun with visitors."[7] Utopian communities had to walk a fine line between isolation and interaction, and Nauvoo was no exception. While both communities saw surrounding society as corrupt and misled, their survival and growth depended on that very society which they were seeking to escape. Neither community successfully negotiated this difficult balance; but Nauvoo is instructive, in part, because it witnessed two different attempts at perfection and the outcomes of each group's efforts. The reasons for their

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[7] Kanter, 16, 83.

"failure" are as important and instructive as the reasons for their many successes as communities.

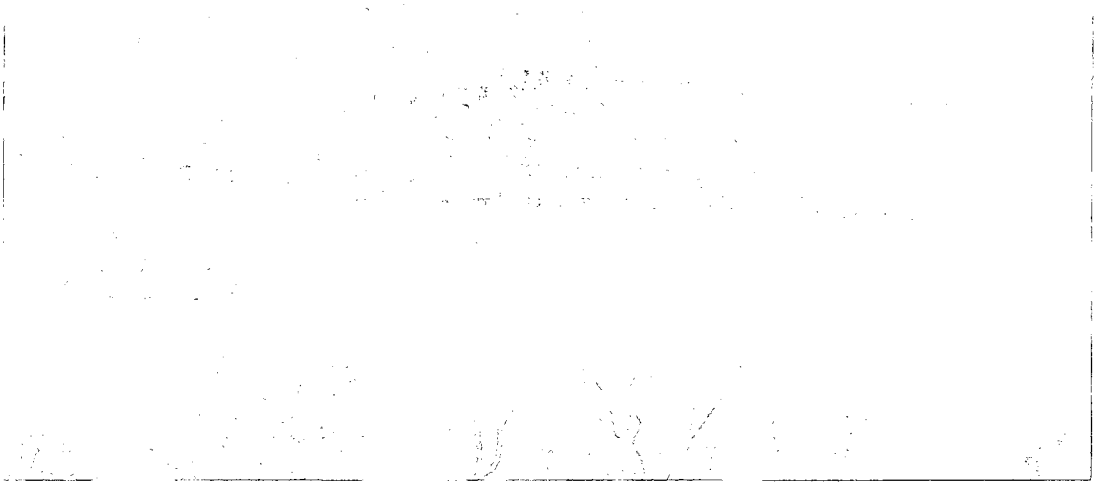

Figure 31 View of Nauvoo from the West Bank of the Mississippi River. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

The Mississippi River

The fate of both communities was largely shaped by their choice of location. Kanter's research proves that successful communities were not usually located near rivers, but the two communities at Nauvoo were surrounded by a river on three sides, which profoundly impacted both communities.[8] The experience of both Mormons and Icarians cannot be understood in isolation from the Mississippi River, and it was tremendously significant to the communities' identity as Glenn Rice and Michael A. Urban assert: rivers, especially big rivers were important to a community's "collective

[8] Ibid., 83.

sentiment, self-presentation, image and identity." A river town was more than a geographical location; it was a place imbued with meaning by those who lived there and who enjoyed a discernable bond with their environment.[9] Both the Mormons and Icarians were affected by profound and ongoing interactions with the river.

First, Nauvoo's location on the Mississippi River meant that it afforded easy transport of converts and material goods necessary to build up a city. British converts to Mormonism crossed the Atlantic, took steamboats up the Mississippi and landed right on the banks of their new home. For Mormons, transportation was of utmost importance in building the city and especially the temple because many supplies, such as lumber, were unavailable in Nauvoo and had to be shipped there. The easy access provided by the river was also one of Cabet's primary reasons for locating his community at Nauvoo. The Icarians' earlier failure in Texas was largely due to the difficulty of transporting goods, supplies and people over the rough terrain of Texas to their new community. After their extreme difficulties in Texas, the relatively short and easy voyage up the Mississippi to their new home was an attractive option for the tired Icarians.

Secondly, the river also allowed for tourists who could visit and witness the advantages of each community. Nauvoo was located on a peninsula near a stretch of rapids that was extremely difficult to navigate. Most boats would dock on one end of the peninsula and transfer cargo and passengers to another boat on the other side, thus avoiding the treacherous rapids altogether. The necessity of unloading and reloading cargo meant that a considerable number of people whose destination was a location other than Nauvoo disembarked there and spent time and money in the city while supplies were

[9] Rice and Urban, 1-2.

H. Lewis

Plate 48. NAUVOO, ILLINOIS

Figure 32 View of Nauvoo and the Temple from across the River. lithograph, 1848, Henry Lewis. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

being transferred. River traffic proved to be an important financial resource for the town under both its Mormon and Icarian inhabitants, but it would have posed an additional capitalistic threat to the communistic Icarians.

By 1843, three or four steamboats docked daily at Nauvoo, some bringing supplies, some new converts from as far away as the British Isles, and many stopping to let interested travelers get a glimpse of the city and the famed Mormon temple.[10] Travel books in the 1840s and 1850s frequently mentioned Nauvoo as a place of interest to the traveler in the United States. This small and rather unremarkable town that had sprung from the swampy banks of the Mississippi River in 1839 became an American landmark,

[10] Dennis Rowley, "Nauvoo: A River Town," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 257-258.

attracting visitors including Henry David Thoreau and Catharine Beecher.[11] As Icarian Jean-Claude Cretinon recorded, "Many cities more important than Nauvoo are not as frequently visited by travelers, because the stay of the Mormons, and after them, the Icarians, have made this little spot well known. It is rare to see a steamboat stop for several hours at Montrose, on the other side of the river, without the travelers coming to visit. . . . They stop in front of the temple, admire what is left of it, play several pieces of patriotic or religious music, then erupt into the refectory, which they visit with a surprising *sans-gêne*."[12]

The river was important to Nauvoo in part because both communities were dependent on outside visitors as witnesses of the validity of each group's vision. Both groups conceived of themselves as forerunners, as lights on a hill to the world that they would eventually revolutionize. They had to have contact with civilization to proselytize new members and to demonstrate the superiority of their system.[13] The city of Nauvoo itself was a visual testament to their respective philosophies and successes, and both communities welcomed visitors and included buildings for their accommodation. Smith and his Saints expected that people from all over the world, including "kings and queens" and "the great ones of the earth" would come to Nauvoo to see the temple and contemplate the city's glory.[14] Mormons and their leaders encouraged tourist traffic in Nauvoo and saw such visits as an opportunity to expose the doctrines of Mormonism and offer evidence of their success. Their hope was that visitors would come away with

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[11] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," *The Atlantic Monthly* 9, no. 56 (June 1862), "American Memory," The Library of Congress, << http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?ncps:1:./temp/~ammem_XciW::>>, 14 January 2009; Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in Domesticity* (New York: Norton, 1976), 200-201.
[12] Mulder and Mortensen, vi; Rude, 146.
[13] Hayden, 16.
[14] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:449, 5:137.

impressions similar to those of Stephen A. Douglas who "expressed his satisfaction of what he had seen and heard respecting our people. . . and likewise spoke in high terms of our location and the improvements we had made, and that our enterprise and industry were highly creditable to us."[15]

Joseph Smith's grandiose visions about the importance and interest of the temple and Nauvoo were at least partly fulfilled. Nauvoo was listed in travel books and people from all over the United States and Europe came to see what the Mormons were making of their city.[16] Mormons often invited visitors to attend public events and celebrations in Nauvoo such as the Fourth of July and the laying of the cornerstone of the temple. A reported fifteen thousand people from three states attended the Fourth of July activities in Nauvoo in 1843 where they heard preaching by Parley P. Pratt and music by the Nauvoo Band. Many afterwards visited the temple to see "the baptismal font, oxen, and other works of Mormon art."[17]

Mormon Nauvoo included half a dozen hotels, mostly along the river, indicating a regular traffic of visitors.[18] The importance and desirability of tourist traffic to Nauvoo is highlighted by the projected Nauvoo House, which was conceived as a five-story L-shaped brick building along the river to serve as a hotel and that would also include housing for the prophet Joseph Smith and his family. The hotel was projected to cost $300,000, a staggering sum for the time, and was to be the most significant single investment in Nauvoo apart from the temple.[19] Backed by a joint-stock corporation, the

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[15] *Times and Seasons*, 15 May 1841.
[16] Mulder and Mortensen, vi.
[17] *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 5 July 1843; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:491; Haven, 145.
[18] Leonard, 148.
[19] Richard W. Jackson, 30.

Nauvoo House was a business venture and also a public works project to employ the poor citizens of Nauvoo and was designed to be the primary landing place for goods and

Figure 33 The Nauvoo House. Painting by David Smith. Courtesy of LDS Church History Library/Archives.

passengers traveling on the Mississippi River.[20] The projected hotel would capitalize on the river traffic, providing an important source of income for the Church. The venture was not entirely economic however, as all stockholders had to be believers in the Book of Mormon. The Nauvoo House was a religious and spiritual enterprise closely tied to the temple. Along with the temple, it received the divine sanction of a revelation, and with the temple was to be an "ensign to the nations."[21] A revelation canonized in the Doctrine and Covenants stated that the Nauvoo House was to be "a delightful habitation for man,

[20] Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 179, 182; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4: 274-286, 311.
[21] The Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 15:26; The Doctrine and Covenants 64:42, 124:19.

and a resting place for the weary traveler, that he may contemplate the glory of Zion, and the glory of this, the cornerstone thereof."[22] Along with the temple, the hotel came to symbolize the process and progress of building the kingdom of God and was the primary link between temple and tourism.

Like Joseph Smith, Étienne Cabet was eager to have visitors to Nauvoo, especially "influential people who come here to learn the means of being happy to report it in their country," including writers, publicists, American politicians, philosophers and European revolutionaries.[23] Cabet commented on the importance of such visitors to Icaria when he wrote, "Several persons of distinction who have visited us at Nauvoo, public officials, members of Congress, writers, all seemed to applaud our doctrines of fraternity

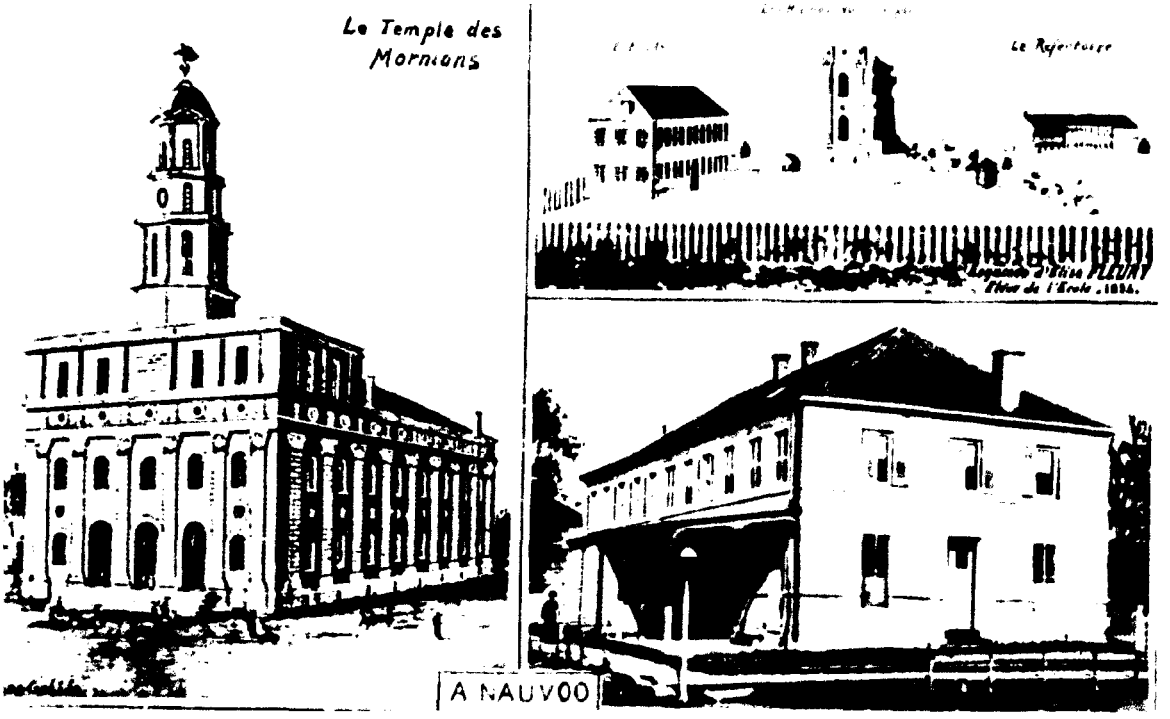

Figure 34 Postcard of Nauvoo in French showing the important buildings: the temple, the Icarian schoolhouse, and the refectory. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

[22] The Doctrine and Covenants 124:23; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:274-286.
[23] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 5-6; Francis and Gontier,187.

and equality and assured us that when our doctrines will be made known, we will have the sympathy and support of the democratic Press in America and of the public opinion."[24] Cabet was certain that such enlightened thinkers would recognize the superiority of his system, and they had the means to publicize the Icarian vision and their success at Nauvoo, thus attracting new members and justifying Icaria to its sometimes critical neighbors. Cabet recognized that the city itself was the best piece of public relations and propaganda the Icarians had working in their favor: "When a Colony is founded, organized, and sufficiently developed, it must desire to be visited by outsiders, because this is one of the most important forms of propaganda."[25] For Cabet, the physical city, its buildings, gardens and homes were an incontrovertible testimony of the success of the community and tangible proof of the validity of the Icarian system. As author and arbiter of the community Cabet carefully controlled the visits to orchestrate Icaria's image. He issued formal "Regulations for Visitors," which stated that a visitor had to have explicit approval of the President of the Community before being admitted to the Icarian refectory, to any meetings, recreational activities, or to the General Assembly.[26] This regulation allowed Cabet to exercise absolute control over the admission of visitors to the community and thus to maintain control over the image of the community.

Enough people came to see Icaria that the Icarians apparently constructed some sort of hotel to house them. Although little is known about the building, Cabet does mention that visitors to the community had to stay in their hotel and observe their

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[24] Étienne Cabet, "Esprit des Journaux Américains envers l'Émigration Française-Icarienne," *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 2ème livraison, 32.
[25] Étienne Cabet, "Règlement sur les visites," *La Colonie Icarienne*, 2 août 1854.
[26] Ibid.

regulations.[27] The noticeable lack of attention to this building in other reports indicates that it was nowhere near the scale of the intended Nauvoo House and reflected the general decline in tourism to Nauvoo during the Icarian period. In 1850, Cabet proudly recorded that "three or four steamboats arrive each week," but this was a dramatic decline from what it had been only a few years earlier.[28] Emma Smith, who remained in Nauvoo after her husband's death and the Mormons' exodus, ran a boarding house for visitors to the city. In an 1850 letter, she noted the decline of tourist traffic and commented that, "If business is not better here in the spring than it was last, I think I shall take the sign down and do all I can on the farm."[29] But Cabet still remained optimistic. In July of 1850 he recorded that "a large number of American tourists of both sexes, arrived by way of steam boat and stopped at Nauvoo to visit our Colony and especially the ruins of the Temple."[30] Cabet's account unconsciously highlights the reason for many visits to Nauvoo. Even after the Mormon exodus, people visited Nauvoo primarily to see what remained of the Mormon city and temple; many took with them pieces of temple stone scattered about Temple Square. In most cases the Icarians were an afterthought, a foreign footnote quietly existing in Mormon space. People were more interested in Nauvoo as a Mormon relic than as a living example of foreign communism. Sketches and engravings of Nauvoo from the Icarian period often focused on the Mormon influence on the city, showcasing the temple, which by then had been nearly completely destroyed.

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[27] Sutton, "An American Elysium," 283.
[28] Étienne Cabet, "Mon cher Beluze" 4 juin 1850, microfilm of SIU Cabet papers, Cabet Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[29] Quoted in Newell and Avery, 256.
[30] Étienne Cabet, "Prévue de la Semaine Icarienne du 30 juin au 6 juillet 1850," Mardi 2 juillet, Étienne Cabet Papers, 1850-1851, L. Tom Perry Special Collections., Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Creating Boundaries

Like their utopian predecessors, the Puritans, both the Mormons and the Icarians were invested in creating Eden in exile. But unlike the Puritans who enacted their utopian aspirations in the isolation of a relative wilderness, the Mormons and Icarians attempted to do the same in the close confines of a hostile culture that existed at their very doorstep. Nauvoo's location on the Mississippi River and its significant population of non-community members meant that neither group had the requisite geographical distance that Kanter identifies for a successful community, so they had to rely on other means to create a sense of distance and to reinforce their separateness from larger society. Both communities took a mixed approach that included encouraging interaction with outsiders while concomitantly creating boundaries to ensure isolation and the integrity of their respective communities. Because geographic isolation and boundaries were almost non-existent in Nauvoo, each community relied on ideological and symbolic boundaries to create a sense of distance and difference from those around them.

Borders, whether physical or ideological, define a community; they set it off from its neighbors and its environment and give it a clear focus. Gerardus Van der Leeuw expresses it in terms of "politics of exclusion," by which the integrity of the inside was ensured by maintaining and reinforcing boundaries.[31] Clear boundaries tend to create strong communities, to protect them from outside influences and to foster a sense of commitment and group identity. Boundaries have ideological and even religious significance as they divide and differentiate those inside the community from those without, conceptualizing those within the community positively and the outside

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[31] Quoted in Chidester and Linenthal, 8.

negatively.[32] The creation of boundaries contributes to the creation of a distinct identity and a sense of belonging in opposition to "outsiderness" or "foreignness." Martha Sontaag Bradley points out that the internal space of the community was that of "personal negotiations, shared assumptions, and common beliefs," while the exterior space was that of the "Other."[33] Both groups sought to create a model of center and periphery, inside and outside, that was understandable and legible and that could be easily maintained and reproduced. Nauvoo under both sets of inhabitants included spaces that rendered visible important dichotomies—inside/outside, community/individual, and cooperation/capitalism. To these the Mormons added another important defining dichotomy—that of faith/unbelief, represented most clearly in the temple.

Both communities' careful construction of boundaries was due in part to the significant population of non-community members living within the borders of the city. While Nauvoo was and is still considered the city of the Mormons, there was a significant non-Mormon population living within the city. In spite of their close-knit character, the Saints welcomed outsiders, immigrants and those of other faiths. A Proclamation of the First Presidency issued in January 1841 declared that, "We wish it likewise to be distinctly understood, that we claim no privilege but what we feel cheerfully disposed to share with our fellow citizens of every denomination, and every sentiment of religion. And therefore say, that so far from being restricted to our own faith, let all those who desire to locate themselves in this place, or the vicinity, come, and we will hail them as citizens and friends." Two months later the Nauvoo City Council passed an Ordinance on Religious Liberty in Nauvoo stating that, "all other religious Sects and denominations

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[32] Kanter, 84, 169.
[33] Bradley, "Creating the Sacred Space of Zion," 16, 21.

whatever, shall have free toleration, and equal Privileges in this city."[34] The *Nauvoo Neighbor* reprinted articles stating that the non-Mormon population of Nauvoo from 1839 to 1846 was variously one-third or one-half of the total population. These numbers were doubtless exaggerated, and modern estimates have placed the non-Mormon population of Nauvoo at ten percent.[35] This is a much smaller number than contemporary estimates, but it still means that over one thousand of the inhabitants of the city were not Mormon.

Many of Nauvoo's critics and neighbors did not investigate the actual situation in Nauvoo and therefore were unaware of the city's tolerant nature. Popular notions of Nauvoo centered on the Book of Mormon, the role and character of the prophet Joseph Smith, the Mormon's missionary zeal and the concept of Zion.[36] The Saints' religious beliefs and social practices did little to mitigate this perception. Mormons were largely insular and kept to themselves. The idea of a separate community, a distinctly Mormon society set apart from all others was fundamental to Mormon history and city building from the very inception of the movement.[37] At Nauvoo the Saints achieved a greater degree of separation both constitutionally and psychologically than they had in any of their previous communities, though they were still geographically close to outsiders. This served to fuel the popular concept of Nauvoo as a "city of fanatics" and as an unusual

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[34] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:273, 306; Calvin V. French, "Organization and Administration of the Latter-day Saint School System of Free Education, Common School through University at Nauvoo, Illinois, 1840-1845," M.A. Thesis (Temple University, 1965), 28-29.
[35] *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 9 August 1843 and 13 September 1843; George W. Givens, *In Old Nauvoo*, 143.
[36] James B. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's 'First Vision' in Mormon Thought," *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past*, ed. Michael Quinn (Salt Lake, Signature Books, 1992), 39.
[37] Jan Shipps, "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years," Ph.D. diss. (University of Colorado, 1965), 41; O'Dea, 166; Robert Bruce Flanders, "Dream and Nightmare: Nauvoo Revisited," 145-146.

"holy city."[38] These notions were only exacerbated with the construction of the temple on the hill, which became the clearest physical indicator of Mormon difference.

For the most part the Mormons had no ethnic or linguistic markers of difference to identify and contain them; they were clearly different, and un-American to some, but not in visible ways. They looked and spoke like other westering people on the American frontier. For the most part, Mormons in Nauvoo were pioneers from a New England Protestant background whose only difference from those around them were their religious beliefs and practices. Yet both the Mormons and their non-Mormon neighbors were eager to identify and define them as different. Unlike the Icarians who were unmistakably foreign in their speech and dress, the Mormons maintained a sense of separation and identity based on unique moral and ideological elements. They embraced their identity as a "peculiar people."[39] Mormons considered themselves peculiar because of their identity as God's chosen, set apart from the rest of the world, but for their neighbors, they were peculiar in their unorthodox religious and social practices.

The boundaries between the holy city of Nauvoo and the purported wicked world around it were largely ideological and scriptural. Mormons in Nauvoo identified themselves as "Saints," or faithful members of the church and kingdom of God. The notion of Saints was understood to be in clear distinction to Gentiles, a dividing line that was inscribed in the Bible and the Book of Mormon and enacted in the community in a

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[38] O'Dea, 56; Haven, 616; De Leon, 526.
[39] Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 113; Olsen, 32-33; The Holy Bible, King James Version, 1 Peter 2:9.

symbolic division between the sacred and profane.[40] The demarcation between Saints and Gentiles was so evident and deeply embedded in Nauvoo that even non-Mormons adopted the terminology. Illinois Governor Thomas Ford observed that Nauvoo society was clearly divided along Saint-Gentile lines.[41] Charlotte Haven, who lived with her brother in Nauvoo during the Mormon period, wrote in a letter to her sister Isa in January 1843 that, "There are two more Gentile brethren arrived in the city, and they will be quite an agreeable acquisition to our little society."[42] Later that same year she wrote that, "Notwithstanding the cold and mud, we have passed a pleasant winter, our society being mostly confined to our little Gentile band."[43] Charlotte's letters reveal how profoundly Nauvoo was divided and how non-Mormons fell (unconsciously or derisively) into using Mormon terminology. Her comments imply that the Gentiles were greatly outnumbered by the Mormons and were clearly aware of their minority status in the city. She also referred to the social segregation and limited mixing between the two groups. Segregation even extended to schools; Charlotte Haven herself taught a school for children of non-Mormons where they would be safe from the threat of "Mormon indoctrination."[44]

The Saint-Gentile division was eventually inscribed into the city of Nauvoo itself, as residents chose to build homes in distinct parts of Nauvoo. Joseph Smith, as trustee-in-trust-for the church, owned most of the land on the flats near the river. Smith, in his

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[40] The Holy Bible, King James Version, Acts 9:32. The division between Saints and Gentiles extends throughout the Book of Mormon; significant passages are found in The Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13-14; The Doctrine and Covenants 115:6, 133:7-8.
[41] Gregg, 149.
[42] Haven, 620.
[43] Quoted in Mulder and Mortensen, 119.
[44] Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Nauvoo Neighborhood," 77; Brian D. Jackson, "Preparing Kingdom-Bearers: Educating the Children of Nauvoo," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (2002): 64-65.

original plat of Nauvoo, planned for the lower lands to become the main commercial and residential center of Nauvoo. Water and Main Streets, which intersected at the Prophet's home, were originally designed as the largest and widest streets in the town and were to be the site of the center of Nauvoo. As Saints continued to flock to Nauvoo, and especially with the influx of British Saints beginning in 1840, competition began to arise over selling lands to the new converts. Smith was at a disadvantage because the lower lands were swampy and mosquito-infested and were typically associated with transients, criminals, social outcasts and "misfits." Through organized drainage efforts and active boosterism, Smith sought to overcome many of the negative associations of the river bottom.[45] Smith's role as prophet outweighed the disadvantages. He did not hesitate to use his ecclesiastical leverage to encourage newcomers to purchase their land from him: "We can beat all our competitors in lands, price and everything," he told a group of newly arrived British Saints. "The lower part of town is the most healthful. In the upper part of town are the merchants who will say that I am partial, &c; but the lower part of the town is much the most healthful; and I tell you in the name of the Lord."[46] A brief notice in the *Missouri Republican* illustrates the escalating tension: "There are two public houses–the 'Nauvoo Mansion' and the 'Masonic Hall.' The former is kept by the prophet. Another hotel, three stories high, built of brick, situated near the Temple, is nearly completed."[47] While the center of the town and especially commercial activity did shift to the temple hill, most of the church leaders supported Joseph in his promotion of the flats by purchasing land and building homes near the river. Brigham Young, Sidney Rigdon,

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[45] Rice and Urban, 3.
[46] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:356-357.
[47] LeGrand L. Baker, *Murder of the Mormon Prophet: Political Prelude to the Death of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2006), 356.

Wilford Woodruff, John Taylor and Parley and Orson Pratt all bought land and built houses near Joseph Smith.[48] The rank-and-file membership followed suit; many church members chose to settle on the river bottom near Joseph Smith and the other leaders of the church, while most non-Mormons residents of Nauvoo chose to live on the bluffs overlooking the flats, resulting in a dividing line through the city.

Like the Mormons, the Icarians fostered a hope of being safely insulated from the outside community to carry out their utopian vision unhampered by outside forces, but they also mixed with the larger American society and culture.[49] In one important sense their choice of location was a poor one. In choosing to purchase Temple Square, Cabet committed the majority of their resources to a building in ruins and a small piece of land right in the center of an already existing community. The Icarians were a small communistic island in the middle of a sea of American capitalism. Even at the peak of

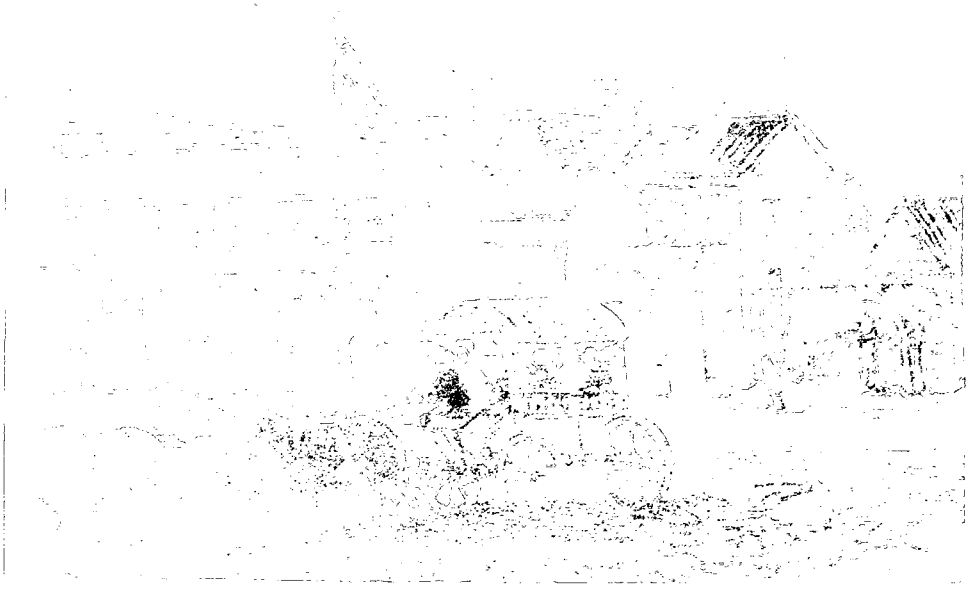

Figure 35 La Colonie de Nauvoo. Etching from French periodical about 1848. This shows the commercial district of Nauvoo about the time of the Icarians' arrival. Courtesy LDS Church History Library/Archives.

[48] Property records from the Land and Records Research Center, Nauvoo, Illinois.
[49] Sutton, "An American Elysium," 293.

their population and prosperity, the Icarians were vastly outnumbered in Nauvoo, making up only a fourth of the town's total population of over two thousand residents.[50] And the more than dozen reported stores that existed in Nauvoo in 1850 suggest a healthy capitalism that would have been inimical to the Icarian communist agenda.[51] One Icarian wrote in his memoirs that the members of the colony were "in the middle of the inhabitants of the city, who came and went around them."[52] This made the creation and maintenance of a coherent communist community difficult, if not impossible.

Like Mormon Nauvoo, Icaria was built and maintained on a system of isolation and exclusion, and to a certain extent Icarian solidarity and continuity depended on these practices. The ideal Icarian community in *Voyage* was an isolated one, located on an island in the remote New World. Icaria was clearly defined by its geographical nature, and access to it was carefully controlled. In the fictional Icaria, "strangers" or non-Icarians who owned property in the country were forced to sell to Icarians following the revolution, and foreigners were then no longer permitted to acquire property within Icaria; furthermore, outsiders such as Carisdall had to gain approval before entering the country; they also had to pay a substantial fee and leave all money and personal belongings behind.[53] That there were a substantial number of visitors drawn to the fictional Icaria is emphasized by the existence of a *hôtel des étrangers*.[54] The hotel, however, also calls attention to the fact that foreign visitors were almost quarantined and were carefully separated from the mass of Icarian citizens.

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[50] Ibid., 292-293; Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 68.
[51] Étienne Cabet, "Letter to Smith Tuttle, esq. of New York, January 25, 1850, Nauvoo," Illinois State Historical Library Collection, Folder 1, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[52] Frédéric Olinet, *Voyage d'un Autunois en Icarie à la suite de Cabet* (Autun: Dejussieu, 1898), 110.
[53] Piotrowski, 90-91; Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 376.
[54] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 6.

The real Icaria tried to achieve the ideal balance of isolation and controlled interaction, but its location and situation in the middle of a river town compromised these goals and eventually the integrity of the community. The Icarian community was physically more circumscribed and closely defined than the Mormon population. Their rented farmland was located on the outside of the city, which necessitated some travel and mixing, and their inability to be completely self-sufficient led to interaction with the larger community, but for the most part they kept to themselves. The Icarian community was largely confined to two city blocks at the center of the city—one of them the famed Temple Square. Nearly all of their buildings were constructed on the perimeter of Temple Square, forming a wall of buildings enclosing the more open and public area in the middle of the block. This physical arrangement of buildings performed three functions: it separated the community from perceived evils, it created a barrier that encouraged isolation, and it turned the members' focus inward to the community and away from the outside world.[55] The Icarians reinforced the physical borders through other means—living closely together in communal housing, speaking French and keeping to themselves.

However, because of their location in America and along America's busiest highway, the Mississippi River, they were incapable of remaining untouched by outside influences and maintaining the purity of their language and traditions. A close look at Icarian history reveals that although isolated linguistically and ideologically, there was still considerable interaction with the outside world. Icarian historian Jules Prudhommeaux notes that the Icarians' central location and inevitable mixing with the

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[55] Kesten, 59.

other Nauvoo inhabitants subjected them to social and cultural pressures that threatened the material and moral unity of the community.[56]

Yet in a sense, Icarian "foreignness," including their language, culture, and even dress, distinguished them from their American neighbors in ways that were comparable to other immigrant communities. Their foreign roots clearly set them apart from their immediate neighbors and defined them as "Other." The Icarians were mostly French immigrants, which created a sense of cohesion among them and created a social and ideological gap between them and their neighbors. As James Robinson points out, the very act of immigration created a sense of community: "Breaking away from the native community, migrating westward, and building new communities were terrible wrenches to individuals, leading them to seek a set of values and an identification which was unchangeable in the midst of change."[57] Icarians' shared beliefs and values served as an ideological adhesive and created a tightly knit community that insulated them to a certain extent from outside forces. Icarians found greater stability and comfort than many of their countrymen in America because of this sense of community, uniqueness and mission. Rather than finding commonalities with their American neighbors and trying to integrate themselves into American society, Icarians emphasized their own common beliefs and values, thus strengthening their own identity and concomitantly distancing those around them.

The Icarians' foreign language acted as the clearest line of demarcation to distinguish them from those living around them in Nauvoo. One French Icarian, Lacour, commented on his voyage up the Mississippi River to Nauvoo that, "the difficulty of

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[56] Prudhommeaux, 256.
[57] James Oliver Robertson, *American Myth, American Reality* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 78.

getting along with the Americans, because we don't speak English, has created many misunderstandings."[58] Icarians made few efforts to learn English, and they continued to speak and teach French in their American community.[59] Icarian children learned English in the Icarian school at Nauvoo, but most of the older generation never learned it. This was at least partly because dealings with outsiders were conducted almost exclusively by Cabet. As president of Icaria, Cabet was the only one authorized to carry on business with those outside of the community. He controlled the purchase and selling of materials and the exchange of money. All other Icarians, even members of the *Gérance*, were securely kept within the Icarian fold safely away from the threatening influences of the outside world. Cabet's careful restriction of interaction with outsiders meant that Icarians didn't have any pressing reason to learn the language of their neighbors, nor were there any real opportunities for Icarians to practice English even if they had had an encouragement to learn it. Icarian historian Prudhommeaux points out that not only their inability to communicate in English but also their ignorance of American history and public life set them apart from their neighbors and forced them to withdraw into themselves.[60] Contemporary observers noticed the same tendency:

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[58] Rude, 137.

[59] French was the official language of the community in spite of the presence of other nationalities.
Nationalities in the colony, 19 Jul 1854:
German: 65
Swiss: 6
Italian: 2
Spanish: 1
English: 1
Swedish: 1
American: 1
French: 325
Gundy Collection, Box 3, Folder 5, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.

[60] Prudhommeaux, 294.

> A few only speak a few words of broken English. They never employ or ask for employment, and thus keeping aloof from the natives, they grow up in the same ignorance of America as a peasant of Burgundy, in the very incarnation of egotism under the shape of communism. Their organization is that of a large boarding house, the boarders pledging themselves to take no interest in anything out of the walls of the boarding house.[61]

By insisting that all members of the community speak French, regardless of their nationality, Cabet ensured a certain degree of homogeneity among the members and insulated them from outside influences.

The Icarians, along with other French immigrants, were further alienated from the American mainstream by their Catholic roots. European immigrants came from a society that many Americans perceived as old and corrupt; they carried with them the seeds of a Catholic system that was "adverse to liberty" and could potentially destroy democratic principles.[62] Nancy Hunter, a resident of Illinois, expressed a nativist fear of foreign Catholic influence when she wrote, "Now methinks were I an inhabitant of Hancock county, I would much rather the Mormons would have possession [of the temple] than the Catholics. Doubtless they have deep designing well laid plans and when once they get a foothold, there is no telling what they may do connected as they are with a foreign power."[63] French Icarians, while professing no religion but that of *Communauté*, were still classed with the "dangerous papists" who threatened the values of Protestant America and were thus perceived as foreign and un-American.[64]

Cabet tried to control the integrity of community by ensuring that any contact with those outside the community was to be on his terms. Cabet was not totally

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[61] "The Mormons," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 August 1854, Lillian Snyder Private Collection.
[62] Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*. 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 14.
[63] Quoted in Holzapfel and Je Holzapfel, 159.
[64] Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*, 279.

isolationist, but he was inconsistent in allowing members to associate with their Nauvoo neighbors. Shortly after the Icarians' arrival in Nauvoo, Cabet hosted a conciliatory meeting with prominent citizens of Nauvoo to assure them of Icaria's peaceful and moral intentions. After this meeting, the Nauvoo residents hosted a ball at a nearby hotel to "celebrate the fraternization of their citizens with the Icarian Society."[65] The Icarians were invited but did not come because Cabet was worried about mixing with their individualistic American neighbors. On a later occasion, the celebration of the anniversary of the departure of the Icarian avant-garde, the Icarians hosted a ball attended by their American neighbors to promote "fraternization between the Icarians and the residents of the country."[66] Cabet loudly preached the practice of fraternity, but apparently there were certain limitations to fraternization. Cabet considered unsupervised mingling with non-Icarians as an infraction against the rules of the community. While associating with outsiders was not technically forbidden by any Icarian decree, indiscriminate mixing was looked down upon. "What shall be said of a brother or sister, who every day should quit the company of his brothers and sisters to frequent that of strangers, and who can find no pleasure but in their society?" Cabet asked.[67] Cabet later stated that those who missed the mandatory meeting of the General Assembly, "passing the evening elsewhere, especially with persons outside the community, fail in all their duties."[68] Cabet cast the very desire to associate with outsiders as un-Icarian, calling into question one's loyalty and compromising one's standing in the community. Cabet also

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[65] *Meeting des Citoyens de Nauvoo à l'établissement des Icariens*, quoted in Garno, *Citoyennes and Icaria*, 82.
[66] Cabet, "Célébration du cinquième anniversaire," 15.
[67] Cabet, "Fraternity," *Popular Tribune*, 8 February 1851.
[68] Cabet, *Colonie Icarienne aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, 85.

refused to admit any but Icarian children to the Icarians schools, although there were several requests for admission and the added income would have been a great benefit to the community financially.

Cabet soon realized that in spite of his careful and sometimes tyrannical efforts, he couldn't insulate the community completely from outside corrupting influences. By 1851 Cabet realized that his selection of Nauvoo was an unsuitable choice for a successful experiment in communism and declared it a staging ground for a more permanent Icarian community to be located elsewhere. He believed the town exposed Icarians to the prejudices of the "older social organization," meaning those Americans who were "against the community."[69] But because Nauvoo was a temporary necessity, they had to live at least for a short while amongst the older social organization and necessarily have some contact with them.

Conflict

Prospects for both communities were bright enough at the outset; Nauvoo met each community's immediate physical needs, and residents of the area initially welcomed both the Mormons and Icarians. In a burst of patriotic generosity an Illinois newspaper said of the Mormons in 1838, "We welcome them. Our country is now the asylum for the oppressed of all nations."[70] The citizens of neighboring Quincy, Illinois contributed five hundred dollars for the relief of the poor Mormons who fled for their lives from Missouri.[71] The Mormons were gratefully aware of their kind reception and

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[69] Cabet to Beluze, 6 August 1849, quoted in Prudhommeaux, 256, footnote 3.
[70] Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, 14.
[71] Holzapfel and Holzapfel, 13.

acknowledged that since their arrival they had "for the most part been treated with courtesy and respect."[72] The Icarians were similarly welcomed with sympathy and financial support. Upon their arrival in Nauvoo Cabet wrote that, "The inhabitants have shown us much sympathy and seem eager for us to form an establishment here. They are so desirous of this that they appear willing to make sacrifices to facilitate our undertaking."[73] The *Quincy Whig* reported that the Icarian immigrants were "orderly, clean, and industrious" and they "bid them welcome to the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'"[74] Beyond warm feelings and generous praise, Nauvoo residents actually donated $500 to help the Icarians purchase Temple Square.[75]

The good feelings for both communities were destined to be short-lived. The sympathy and generosity shown to the Saints on their arrival in Illinois turned to the envy, bitterness and hatred that led to the murder of Joseph Smith and his brother and to the forced expulsion of the Saints once again from their homes. While never the target of the same vitriolic attacks as the Mormons, the Icarians also suffered from declining public opinion until they too were encouraged to leave Nauvoo. The eventual outcome for both communities was the same, yet each community failed at Nauvoo for very different reasons.

One of the chief reasons for opposition to Mormons was their insistence on gathering together. The Saints recognized this danger immediately after their expulsion from Missouri when they debated about the wisdom of gathering again and starting

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[72] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:212.
[73] Étienne Cabet, "Lettre de M. Cabet, 25 mars 1849," microfilm, Cabet Collection, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[74] *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, 20 March 1849, microfilm, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.
[75] Étienne Cabet, Deuxième Lettre de M. Cabet, publiée dans le journal de Nauvoo," in *Réalisation d'Icarie. Nouvelles de Nauvoo, no. 4*, 62-63; Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 536.

another Mormon city. State officials in Springfield responded to Mormon inquiries by "strenuously urg[ing] the necessity that the Saints should cease to gather in one place."[76] Private opinion was the same as official opinion in Illinois. One woman remarked on the departure of the Saints from Nauvoo that, "If the Mormons would scatter around amongst the white folks, they could live in peace."[77] Many Americans feared close-knit groups and saw their activities as a threat to the principles of republicanism, in which individual conscience was to be focused on the common good, not the good of a particular group. Citizens of Hancock County felt that "free men and Mormons cannot live together in peace and harmony" and that "their presence in any civilized society is perfectly insupportable."[78]

The Mormons' corporate, cooperative nature alienated others for several reasons. First, their cooperative nature required large tracts of land and gave them the resources to purchase entire cities. The Saints considered land primarily as a moral and spiritual resource and part of their covenant relationship with God, which transcended economics and earthly institutions; it was literally and figuratively their "promised land."[79] Their ideology of place conflicted with the views of other Americans who saw land strictly as an economic resource owned by individual men. Second, the scale of the community and the number of members became a threat. Joseph's vision of Zion called for a city of thousands of people living in close proximity, sharing the same beliefs and answering to the same authority. This became a reality in Nauvoo. Mormon converts poured into the

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[76] *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 19 February 1845.
[77] Terryl L. Givens, *The Latter-day Saint Experience in America*, 71.
[78] James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*. 2nd ed (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 4; *Warsaw Signal*, 29 December 1841; *Nauvoo New Citizen*, 23 December 1846.
[79] Allen and Leonard, 62; Olsen, 118-119; Thomas Ford, *A History of Illinois from its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847*. Vol. 2. Ed Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1946), 168.

city by the thousands. By 1845 the population of Nauvoo compromised approximately half of the population of all of Hancock County, the most populous county in Illinois, which had important political and economic implications for the entire county.[80] Finally, Mormon economic practices marginalized and alienated their neighbors. While largely destitute individually, Mormons pooled their resources and became a powerful economic bloc that believed in self-sufficiency and simplicity in consumption which others perceived as monopoly and unfair competition.

The Mormons' very success in their city-building enterprise eventually led to their downfall in Nauvoo.[81] Nauvoo was unlike other frontier societies in its focus, its religious homogeneity and in its astronomical growth. It also differed essentially from other communal societies in its size and expansion.[82] The striking success of the Saints in worldly affairs, their numerical and economic strength were a threat to their neighbors and were clearly inscribed in the city itself. The size of the city and the number of buildings, especially durable brick constructions, built in such a short time were a testimony not only of the Saints' unity, industry and enterprise, but also of their potential power and influence.

All of this was most visibly represented by the massive temple rising slowly but inexorably from the bluffs of Nauvoo. The temple was an embodied representation of most of the sources of conflict—the Mormons' strange doctrines, their large numbers and

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[80] Charles J. Scofield, *History of Hancock County, Illinois*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Munsell Publishing, 1921), 1103; Barrett, 638.

[81] Arrington and Bitton, 49; Bushman and Bushman, *Building the Kingdom*, 75-76; Richard E. Bennett, *We'll Find the Place: The Mormon Exodus, 1846-1848* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 5; Baker, 25. See also Jeffrey R. Holland, Interview, 4 March 2006, "The Mormons," PBS, <<http://www.pbs.org/mormons/interviews/holland/html>>, 10 December 2007.

[82] Miller and Miller, 219; Robert Bruce Flanders, "The Kingdom of God in Illinois: Politics in Utopia," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1970): 26.

economic clout, and their combined influence and power. The temple, through its reification of the sacred-secular dichotomy, emphasized categories of difference among the Mormons and their neighbors. While most Christian groups included baptism, in the temple Mormons entered into additional, "higher" covenants which cemented the Mormons' sense of chosenness and peculiarity; it thus served to strengthen the sense of a people apart.[83] The temple was the most impressive and imposing symbol of Mormon ability and occupancy of the land. As Heidi Swinton states, "The building of a grand edifice did not spark the hatred and aggression, but its imposing and glittering presence on the muddy Mississippi fed the flames."[84] One of Mormons' most vocal and virulent enemies, Thomas Sharp, traced the birth of his antagonism to the laying of the temple cornerstones when he realized the dangerous potential of the Mormon community. The elaborate ceremonies and exaggerated display convinced Sharp of the Church's political, economic and military might. From that moment he saw the prophet's followers not as humble seekers of God but as a clear threat to the established order of the democratic republic, as enemies to be conquered and subdued.[85]

Taken collectively, these perceived threats reveal a common theme: they are all spatial in their orientation. The existence and prosperity of the temple and city were visual and material threats to outsiders. Outsiders resented and misunderstood the nature of the holy city and the sacred temple. Other professed threats involved the disintegration of the distance separating the sacred and the profane.[86] Mormon doctrines and social

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[83] Terryl L. Givens, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford UP, 2007), 55.
[84] Swinton, 30.
[85] John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius, *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995), 55.
[86] Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth*, 82.

practices compromised the assumed inviolability of the barriers between church and state, religion and economics, the individual and society. Mormon cosmology saw everything as comprising one great whole in which all was spiritual, and this holistic theology profoundly affected their political, social and economic practices in ways that antagonized many of their neighbors.

The Icarians suffered from hostility as well, although on a much more limited scale. Cabet's decision to locate in Nauvoo meant that he and his followers inherited latent antagonism from neighbors who were suspicious of cohesive groups. While Cabet exulted that their new neighbours showed "much sympathy" and seemed eager to "aid in their enterprise," evidence suggests that some were suspicious and that their eagerness for Icarian settlement was motivated only by the declining financial fortunes of the city.[87] A letter from Harris and Waters regarding business in Nauvoo includes a reference to Icarians in the postscript: "Since *Mormons* have left our midst *business is falling away.* Have you found it true in Hancock Co. near vicinity of Nauvoo Warsaw or Carthage? Etienne Cabet, the former stalwart French Icarian, and his company are a selfish community, and even though he is dead his wishes are still being carried out, in Nauvoo Hancock Co."[88]

At least part of the hostility towards the Icarians was part of a rising tide of xenophobia that was sweeping the entire country. Americans were skeptical and cautious about foreigners during a period of increasing nationalism that emphasized severing ties with Europe and asserting an American sense of "manifest destiny." Icaria existed at the

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[87] Étienne Cabet, "Lettre de M. Cabet, 25 March 1849."
[88] Harris and Waters Letter, Oquawka [?], 18 July 1859 to Mess. Reed & Co., St Louis. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

peak of French immigration to the United States in the 1850s, and along with Irish and German migrations, was the first stage of massive migration from Europe.[89] Like the Icarians, many of these French immigrants found that America was not necessarily a land of equality and ease. The French press in America printed unending stories about the unhappy immigrants who had come to American soil seeking fortune and prosperity only to sink into poverty and suffering.[90] When Americans felt threatened or antagonized, their common response was to draw a line, to create a physical or ideological boundary. As James Robertson point outs, what is as stake in drawing a line is identity, personal, communal and national.[91] This invisible line of demarcation heightened the sense of uniqueness and alienation already characteristic of the Icarians and set them apart from their American neighbors. Icarian historian Jules Prudhommeaux comments that their isolation in the middle of the city emphasized the Icarians' singularity and cast it as a provocation to those around them.[92] However, in contrast to the Mormons, in the French community everything was on a more limited scale. While the Icarians also emphasized gathering to a central community, the population of this community never exceeded six hundred; they had fewer financial and social resources, occupied less land, and were thus a much smaller economic and political threat to those around them. In short, they were easier to ignore.

These external pressures combined with more important and pervasive internal conflicts to spell out the doom of Icaria in Nauvoo. The schism of 1856, which led to

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[89] Nelson, 33-34; Lloyd Gundy, "Highlights of the Immigration of French Icarians to America," p.1, Gundy Collection, Box 3, Folder 5, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[90] Cabet, *Almanach Icarien*, 95-96.
[91] Robertson, 92.
[92] Prudhommeaux, 256

Cabet's expulsion from the community and to the eventual abandonment of Nauvoo, stemmed mostly from conflict within the community. Almost from the moment the Icarians arrived in Illinois there were numerous, if insignificant conflicts. In an 1849 letter to Brigham Young during a visit to Nauvoo, John Bernhisel wrote that, "The character of the population was represented to me as being very bad, and growing worse. The Icarians, or French socialists, number two hundred and forty, all told, and it is more than probably that they will, ere long, be divided into the original elements, thirty-four having recently seceded."[93] Within only a few months' of the Icarians' arrival in Nauvoo, members were already leaving the community in significant numbers. Numerous Icarians were disenchanted with life in Nauvoo from the very beginning, as evidenced by the numbers of the community. The thirty-four members who left the community represented fifteen percent of the total membership of Icaria at the time, and members continued to withdraw. While over two thousand members passed through Icaria, the population of the community never exceeded five hundred at one time.

To discourage departures, Cabet declared that those leaving the community could take with them only half of their initial *apport* "in money and in kind." For those who still insisted on leaving, their bags and belongings were searched to ensure they were taking with them only those things that were authorized.[94] Perhaps because of these restrictions, many of the disaffected Icarians chose to stay in Nauvoo, much to Cabet's chagrin. The 1850 Nauvoo census lists 35 Frenchmen living in Nauvoo who were not part of the Icarian community.[95] These French residents of Nauvoo may very well have

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[93] *Journal History of the Church*, 10 September 1849.
[94] Étienne Cabet, *Prospectus; Émigration Icarienne*, 6.
[95] Nauvoo census, 1850, <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, 7 December 2007.

been the thirty-four former Icarians who left the community in the summer of 1849. Rather than returning to France, they remained in Nauvoo and set up a "rival society," which acted as a constant reminder of Icarian failure and disunity. Later dissidents lodged with a M. Negelin, "our compatriot" whom they had known in France.[96] The close proximity of former French Icarians posed a direct threat to Cabet's plans of isolation and insulation because Icarian dissidents saw these countrymen as an avenue of escape from the community. They were also evidence of the possibility of survival and prosperity in American outside the confines of the community.

The larger Nauvoo community was not unaware of the civil war being fought in their midst. Only as internal strains escalated to include food fights, riots and the burning of Cabet in effigy did the citizens of the larger community of Nauvoo intercede and exert pressure on the community in their midst. The Icarians had recurring problems with fires and thefts from individuals outside the community, which were the same strategies used by Illinois residents to drive out the Mormons almost exactly a decade earlier.[97] During the upheaval of 1856, however, a group of townspeople in Nauvoo began holding "secret meetings, organizing and preparing to chase the boisterous communists as they had chased the Mormons before," this time not because of their cohesion, but because the Icarians were evidently in constant internal conflict. The Nauvoo sheriff stepped in to restore order in Icaria and reported the upheaval to the mayor. Because of their "intolerable" combats, the mayor asked Cabet to hurry and complete the separation.[98] Nauvoo residents who had been participating in the secret meetings abandoned their

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[96] Rude, 169.
[97] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 504.
[98] Vallet, 35-36, 39; *History of Hancock County*, 404.

plans to chase out the Icarians when it became evident that they would soon be leaving of their own accord.[99]

In view of the inevitable split of Icaria, Cabet proposed an equal division of assets, with one community remaining in Nauvoo while the other relocated to the newer community in Corning, Iowa. Cabet even allowed the majority to select which community they would claim, but the majority rejected his proposal.[100] Cabet and his followers eventually accepted defeat and moved to several houses in St. Louis, where they planned to rebuild Icaria. Three days later, a stroke ended Cabet's life. His faithful followers buried him with twenty-eight volumes of his published works and a list of his loyal supporters. He was eulogized in France as "one more martyr . . . who [has] died in the service of the People and Humanity."[101] They tried to carry on his vision of a perfect world, but the small community in St. Louis never really got off the ground, and the minority at Nauvoo soon left Icaria for their new community in Corning, Iowa.

The Mormons also suffered from internal dissensions that led indirectly to the downfall of Nauvoo. Numerous members in Nauvoo were disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of their refusal to comply with church practices and accept the church's authority. These "apostates" were led by William and Wilson Law, former faithful members of the church who had occupied positions of leadership. In the early months of 1844 leading up to Joseph Smith's death, the Laws' followers grew to include approximately two hundred people, including members and non-members.[102] They expressed several common complaints with the church. They complained of immorality

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[99] Garno, "Gendered Utopia," 559-560.
[100] Étienne Cabet, *Le Fondateur d'Icarie aux Icariens*, 68, 72.
[101] Quoted in Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 98.
[102] *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 274.

among the leadership of the church in association with plural marriage, loudly proclaiming that Joseph Smith and other church leaders were seducing women and committing adultery with women, both married and unmarried, leading in some cases to the misery and eventual death of the unfortunate women.[103] Many were opposed to the concentration of authority at the top and especially in the person of Joseph Smith. They believed that Joseph Smith had been called as God's prophet, but that he had fallen from God's favor. Especially repugnant to the apostates was Joseph's authority in political and temporal affairs.[104] A visitor to Nauvoo wrote that, "Joe has, doubtless, become somewhat tyrannical. He has attempted to force measures of public policy, as well as articles of religious belief, which many of the better part of the people resist, causing at the present time some little trouble. In the end, such division will doubtless bring the whole system to an end."[105]

The Laws and their supporters decided to print a newspaper with the explicit purposes of pressing for the repeal of the Nauvoo Charter and advocating "unmitigated disobedience to political revelations" and decrying "gross moral imperfections wherever found, either in the plebeian, patrician or self-constituted monarch."[106] The prospectus of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, issued on 7 June 1844, was the only paper ever printed because Smith as mayor and the city council of Nauvoo decreed the press a public nuisance and ordered it destroyed. Editors across the state and in many major cities in the United States

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[103] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:432-433.
[104] Marvin S. Hill, "Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent," *Church History* 49 (September 1980): 291, 296; Daynes, *More Wives Than One*, 23; Journal of Zina D.H. Young, 14 March 1845, quoted in Madsen, *In their Own Words*, 77; *Warsaw Signal*, 19 May 1841.
[105] *Missouri Republican* (St. Louis), 25 April 1844 quoted in Baker, 357.
[106] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 6:443-444.

picked up the story, which exacerbated the already virulent hatred of the Mormons.[107] The escalating *Expositor* conflict led to the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage on 27 June 1844, when they were shot by a mob with blackened faces.

Mormons' enemies were certain that the death of their beloved prophet would be the death knell of Mormonism. The *New York Herald*'s report of Smith's death included this statement: "The death of the modern mahomet will seal the fate of Mormonism. They cannot get another Joe Smith. The holy city must tumble into ruins, and the 'latter day saints' have indeed come to the latter day."[108] The death of the Smith brothers proved a tremendous blow to the individual Saints and to the community at Nauvoo. However, their death, or martyrdom as Mormons preferred to see it, served as a rallying point for the faithful and cemented their sense of community. Mormon believer Warren Foote recorded his reaction in his journal:

> We all felt as though the powers of darkness had overcome, and that the Lord had forsaken His people. Our Prophet and Patriarch were gone! Who now is to lead the Saints? In fact we mourned 'as one mourneth for his only son.' Yet after all the anguish of our hearts, and deep mourning of our souls a spirit seemed to whisper, 'All is well. Zion shall yet arise and spread abroad upon the earth, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and his Christ.' So we felt to trust in God.[109]

The martyrdom of their prophet "only bound them closer than ever," stated Governor Thomas Ford, "gave them new confidence in their faith, and an increased fanaticism."[110] Indeed the Mormon community continued to grow in Nauvoo, which led to further tension and culminated in the eventual expulsion of the entire Mormon community from

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[107] Leonard, 367.
[108] *New York Herald*, 8 July 1844, quoted in Leonard, 419.
[109] Warren Foote's journal entry, 28 June 1844, quoted in Launius and Hallwas, 183.
[110] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:37.

the state of Illinois. An anti-Mormon party was formed with the express goal of driving the Mormons from surrounding settlements. Editor Thomas Sharp called for "war and extermination" in his virulently anti-Mormon newspaper, *The Warsaw Signal.*[111] Vigilantes burned Mormon homes and farms. The governor of Illinois ordered the confiscation of Mormon weapons and sent troops to occupy the city and maintain the peace.

The death of Joseph Smith created something of a crisis among Mormon believers. With the unexpected death of their prophet, the Saints were left for the first time without a prophet and leader and with no clear precedent for how to proceed. Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith's counselor in the First Presidency, stood and claimed that no man could fill the place of Joseph Smith. Rigdon declared that he should be appointed as "a guardian" and spoke at great length about impending judgments and the eventual glorious fate of the kingdom of God. Following Rigdon, Brigham Young, the chief apostle, stood and addressed the crowd, claiming authority for the apostles and urging the continuation of the work Joseph Smith had started, including missionary work, the completion of the temple and the building up of Nauvoo. Young then called for a vote, and those in attendance voted unanimously to sustain Brigham Young and the other apostles as the leading body of the church.[112]

However, there was dissent among members in Nauvoo. Sidney Rigdon refused to recognize Brigham Young's authority and organized his own church in Pittsburgh. A couple in Nauvoo reported that Rigdon "took some few with him and went back to

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[111] *Warsaw Signal*, 12 June 1844.
[112] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:231-242.

Pittsburgh. He made some disturbance in the church, but not much."[113] Other prominent members forged their own path: Lyman Wight, one of the twelve apostles, broke with the main body of the church and founded a succession of communities in Texas. William Smith, the prophet's younger brother, rejected the leadership of Brigham Young and the apostles in favor of his nephew, Joseph Smith III, twelve years old at his father's death. Emma Smith, the prophet's widow, also refused to follow Brigham Young, chose to remain at Nauvoo, and eventually supported her son's claim to authority in the church. A final contender for prophetic succession was James Strang, a recent arrival in Nauvoo and a convert of only a few months. Strang published a letter purportedly dictated by Joseph Smith shortly before his death designating Strang as his successor. Strang's claims to revelation and new scripture convinced several Saints, including some prominent members.

The period following the death of Joseph Smith was one of uncertainty and suffering for the Mormon community at Nauvoo. The Twelve Apostles, as the governing body of the church, made great efforts to consolidate the church and strengthen church members. They saw the conflict over succession as a purging and purifying of the church. "Persecution is for our good," apostle John Taylor wrote, "and if we have had things to endure let us round up our shoulders and bear them in the name of the Lord. Do not find fault if we have a few apostates among us here. . . . It is necessary we should have such things to meet with that we may be made perfect through suffering."[114] In spite of the difficult months in 1844, most of the Saints in Nauvoo remained with the body of the church under Brigham Young and continued to work to build up their city and temple.

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[113] Henry and Catharine Brook to Leonard Pickell, 15 November 1844, quoted in Leonard, 449.
[114] *Times and Seasons*, 20 January 1846.

This focus was a main factor in the continuity of the Mormon community after the death of Smith and in the acceptance of Young as the group's new leader. Mormon believers like Parley Pratt remarked that, "Elder Rigdon . . . said nothing about building the Temple, the city, feeding the poor, etc. We heard a great deal about the Mount of Olives—Brook Kedron—Queen Victoria—great battles, etc. . . . We want to build up Nauvoo, never mind Gog and Magog."[115] Among all of the contenders for authority in Nauvoo, Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles were the only ones who emphasized continuing the work commenced by Joseph Smith, including, significantly, the completion of the temple. "Nauvoo will not hold all the people that will come into the kingdom," Brigham Young declared. "We want to build the Temple, so as to get our endowment."[116]

The increased effort to build the city and the temple, even in the face of the Mormons' increasing certainty that they would soon leave Nauvoo, proved a major sustaining force for the Mormon community at a time of crisis and turmoil.

Figure 36 Heber C. Kimball Home.
Photograph by the author.

The Mormons worked to complete important buildings in the year after Smith's death, including the Nauvoo House, the Seventies Hall and the Concert Hall. Mormon leaders set the example in the building efforts: Brigham Young added two rooms to his home, and apostles Willard Richards and Heber Kimball completed substantial brick homes in

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[115] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:226-229, 298.
[116] Ibid., 7:239.

1845.[117] The focus of activity in Nauvoo, however, was the temple. The Saints renewed their commitment to tithing and redoubled their efforts in the construction of the building. The building stood at just above the first floor at the time of the prophet's death, but it progressed rapidly. The *Warsaw Signal* reported that, "The Temple is going ahead with astonishing rapidity, the greater part of the population being engaged on the work, and all other improvement nearly suspended."[118] Mormon Wandle Mace recorded that "Men were thick as blackbirds busily engaged upon the various portions [of the temple], all intent upon its completion although we were being in constant expectation of a mob. We labored while the wicked raged, the mobs howled, but they could not stop the work on the temple until it was so far completed that it was accepted of the Lord."[119]

Many Nauvoo residents reported that the period following the prophet's death was one of surprising peace and unity. John Taylor wrote in November 1844 that, "All is union and peace at Nauvoo, and the temple is rising rapidly as a token that God has not forsaken his church and people."[120] Brigham Young wrote the following spring that,

> The most perfect union, peace and good feeling has invariably prevailed in our midst, and still continues. It seems like a foretaste of celestial enjoyment and Millennial glory. . . . There are many good buildings erecting in different parts of the city, there is not much sickness in the place, and there never was a more prosperous time, in general amongst the saints, since the work commenced. Nauvoo, or, more properly, the 'City of Joseph,' looks like a paradise. Many strangers are pouring in to view the Temple and the city. They express their astonishment and surprise to see the rapid progress of the Temple, and the beauty and grandeur of Mormon looks.[121]

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[117] Cannon, 41.
[118] "Mormon News," *Warsaw Signal*, 4 September 1844.
[119] Wandle Mace, "Autobiography," 186.
[120] *Times and Seasons*, 15 November 1844.
[121] Letter of Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff, 27 June 1845, Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:431.

Mormon leaders' priority was promoting the unity and progress of the church, and the spiritual, physical and financial demands of the temple held the mass of Mormons together, giving them a common goal and contributing to their sense of community, identity and accomplishment.

However, the very instrument of Mormon integration and unity eventually served to accelerate their expulsion. The Temple was a tangible sign to non-Mormon neighbors of the influence, power and potential of the nearly impoverished, but united Saints. Their hopes of killing the Mormon movement with the murder of its prophet were dashed when they saw even greater unity among the Saints, who were united largely through their fervent efforts to complete the temple.[122] Opponents of Mormonism declared that, "they must drive the Mormons from Nauvoo before the temple was done or they never could."[123] Armed mobs began threatening the Saints and focused their attention on the rising temple. In response Brigham Young called for greater efforts: "We want to build the Temple in this place even if we have to do as the Jews did in the erection of the Temple at Jerusalem; work with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other."[124] So great was the threat of violence that men took guns to work with them along with their tools and some men were taken from the labors of construction to act as guards. The Mormons even eventually placed cannons in the basement of the temple to protect it.[125]

As the walls of the temple rose, so did the hostility of angry onlookers. Even the architecture of the temple fueled speculation and antagonism. Many contemporary

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[122] *Times and Seasons*, 1 April 1845; *Millennial Star*, 1 September 1845; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:431; Arrington and Bitton, 65.
[123] Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Importance of the Temple," 27; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:363.
[124] Quoted in McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 48.
[125] *Journal History of the Church*, 26 September 1844; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:255-259; Wandle Mace, "Autobiography," 103.

reports compared the temple to a fortress, and people envisioned stubborn Mormons securing themselves in the temple and refusing to leave. This view of the temple was only exacerbated when the Mormons started to build a wall about five feet thick and eight feet high enclosing the six acres around the building.[126] In Mormon eyes this wall was a boundary, dividing the sacred from the profane and emphasizing the holy nature of the building and the grounds surrounding it. An article in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* states that, "a wall about the Temple is designed to save it from the common, and is quite like your eastern church yards."[127] But outside eyes saw the wall as serving "no other purpose than that of defense."[128] Even after the Mormons' exodus to the West, the temple still towering over the city was construed as a symbol of the threat of the Mormons' return until it was finally burned in 1848. Outsiders could not believe that the Mormons would simply abandon the building that represented such a tremendous financial investment and that was symbolically so central to the Mormon movement and identity. The inexplicable determination of the Saints to finish the temple even after they had agreed to leave the state created fears that the Mormons would refuse to leave or, having left, would return in greater numbers to reclaim both their temple and the city.[129]

While the temple accelerated the disastrous end of Mormonism in Nauvoo, it proved to be the Saints' salvation in more than one sense. First, temple doctrines and ordinances offered Mormon believers an avenue to spiritual salvation. They believed that

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[126] Craig J. Ostler, "Nauvoo Saints in the Newspapers of the 1840s," *The Nauvoo Journal* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 31; Étienne Cabet, "Description du Temple des Mormons," *Réalisation de la Communauté d'Icarie*, 30-31; *Millennial Star*, 1 September 1845; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 7:431.

[127] *The Nauvoo Neighbor*, 14 May 1845.

[128] *Utica Daily Gazette* (New York), 27 September 1845 and *New York Weekly Tribune*, 4 October 1845 in Ostler, 31.

[129] McGavin, *The Nauvoo Temple*, 140; Ostler, 30-33; see articles in the *Utica Daily Gazette* (New York), 27 September 1845, *New York Weekly Tribune*, 4 October 1845, *St. Louis Reveille*, October 1845, *Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) Argus*, 8 October 1845, and *Salem Register*, 9 October 1845.

the temple was literally the "House of the Lord" and the gateway to heaven. Their religious beliefs and the eternal perspective offered by the temple allowed the suffering Saints to contextualize their difficulties and see themselves as part of a bigger picture that extended into eternity. Even as their city of Nauvoo was threatened and as expulsion became imminent, Mormon faithful fully expected eventual deliverance from and triumph over their enemies, if not in this life then in the next: "We wish to stimulate all the brethren to faithfulness; you have been tried, you are now being tried; . . . but recollect that now is the time of trial; soon the victory will be ours; now may be a day of lamentation–then will be a day of rejoicing; now may be a day of sorrow–but by and by we shall see the Lord; our sorrow will be turned into joy, and our joy no man taketh from us."[130]

The second source of salvation offered by the temple was the sustaining influence it exercised upon the Mormons as a community of believers. In spite of the murder of their prophet and their violent expulsion from their beloved city, the Saints continued to cohere as a community. The primary reason for their continued cohesion and even growth was the Saints' common faith. Edwin S. Gaustad highlights the importance of religion in the community's success: "The thing that held the Mormon community together was its religion. It was not a political community, an economic community; it was a religious community. And any group that is persecuted tends, if they survive the persecution, to be much more closely knit, much more steadfast in their devotion and in their commitment. And that certainly proved to be the case here."[131] Toward the end of 1845, Mormon John Fullmer wrote that, "We cannot remain here in peace any longer. This is demonstrated to

[130] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 3:394.
[131] Swinton, 113.

a certainty; and the spirit bids us flee into the wilderness . . . and although we will be broken up here, we will not be broken up as a people. The Lord is on our side, notwithstanding he suffers us to be persecuted and to endure great tribulation, *for the Kingdom is with us.*"[132] The religious teachings of Mormonism and the doctrines of the temple convinced the Saints that Zion was not a location, but a state of being. Mormon scripture defined Zion as a people, with "one heart and one mind."[133] They were leaving their temple and their city, the "kingdom on the Mississippi," but the kingdom of God would remain with them wherever they went. This conviction, more than any other, maintained the Mormons as a community.

The Icarians also had to face schism, failure and removal. The Icarians, on the other hand, saw difficulties and persecution not as refining mechanisms, but as evidences of the flaws of the system and the impossibility of exactly duplicating the ideal Cabet had set forth.[134] The schism of 1856 fatally fractured the Icarian movement, although the full consequences of the split would not be seen for many years. The two Icarian camps contested for control of Nauvoo as well as for legitimacy and connection with the Icarian Bureau in Paris, which continued recruiting efforts in France and which controlled the allocation of continuing donations. As loyal adherents of Cabet to the end, the minority was expelled from Nauvoo, but in Missouri they managed to win the bid for legitimacy in the eyes of Jean Pierre Beluze, the head of the Paris Bureau. But following the death of Cabet, interest in France lagged and the American Icarians could count on little support from France. They had managed to salvage a mere $526.33 in their departure from

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[132] John S. Fullmer to Uncle John, 18 November 1845, quoted in Leonard, 550.
[133] The Pearl of Great Price, Moses 7:18.
[134] Sutton, "An American Elysium," 291.

Nauvoo, and with the costs of building a new community, debts mounted quickly. Faithful Icarians soon became disenchanted and began leaving the community. By 1862 the community counted only eighty-two members and struggled under a crushing debt. Beluze and the Paris Bureau abandoned them, leaving them to their own meager devices. By 1864 the Icarian community in Missouri was dissolved.[135]

The Icarians remaining at Nauvoo were much better off than their former brothers. They maintained control of most of the assets of the community, including shelter and supplies intended for over five hundred for a community that now numbered only 221 members. Following Cabet's expulsion from Nauvoo, the majority regrouped, forming a new *gérance* as dictated by the Icarian constitution. Jean Baptiste Gérard, the new president, realized that their situation in Nauvoo was precarious. They had substantial debts, and they could no longer count on support from Paris. The community members voted to liquidate all Illinois assets and to relocate the community to Corning, Iowa, where a fledgling Icarian community existed. This decision spelled the doom of Icaria in Nauvoo, but it ensured the survival of Icarianism. The Icarians followed the "Mormon Trail" as far as Adams County, Illinois, where they dug in and began yet another Icaria.

The relocation of the entire community to Iowa forced the Icarians to build a community from scratch. Unlike Illinois, Corning was remote and untouched, affording the Icarians an opportunity to build a community that more exactly matched the ideal vision as set forth in Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie*. They did not have to make do with a city that was a Mormon hand-me-down, but actively forged a community that fostered a

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[135] Sutton, *Les Icarians*, 103-115.

communist society with an indelible Icarian imprint. The buildings were modest, yet functional. Communal buildings, including a dining room, workshops and schools, fostered fraternity, while individual houses provided for a sense of individuality and equality. The financial and ideological demands of such an undertaking united and sustained them as a people in ways that the community at Nauvoo could not. Life was difficult in Iowa, especially early on, but the physical hardships and the psychological sacrifices cemented them as a community. And the nature of their new home—its isolation and its pure Icarian character—in large part ensured the survival of the community for another forty years, making Icaria one of the longest-lasting secular utopias in American history.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The Mormon and Icarian communities each remained in Nauvoo for less than a decade. Because of their short histories and ultimate disappointments, it is tempting to label such groups as failures. However, their practices and various approaches to constructing a model city harboring an ideal society are still instructive. Communal settlements such as those at Nauvoo reveal the profound power of environmental design and social geography to either sustain or undermine fundamental forms of community organization, identity and coherence. Such communities are important to American history as indexes of idealistic attitudes toward land and life and, concomitantly, as practical attempts at social reconstruction.

The history of Nauvoo and the impact of its residents do not end with the Mormon exodus of 1846 or the Icarian departure a decade later. Both groups moved west and built other communities. The Mormons' hegira to Utah is well known because of its sheer scope and its ongoing implications. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, thousands of Latter-day Saints crossed the plains and settled more than five hundred communities across the West, stretching from Mexico up to Canada, that were built on the pattern of Nauvoo.[1] Salt Lake City, the Mormon capital, is the most noticeable application of the Nauvoo model in the West. Two days after their arrival in the valley of

[1] Hamilton, 14.

the Great Salt Lake, Brigham Young drove his walking stick into the dry soil of the valley floor and designated the site for a new temple. This block became the center of the city, which radiated out in an orderly grid from Temple Square. Nearly all Mormon settlements in the west were laid out on the grid pattern established by Joseph Smith in Missouri and Illinois, and many rural towns in Utah still bear the clear imprint of Smith's "Plat of the City of Zion." And Mormonism as a community of believers has continued to flourish, although they are now recognized more readily as a worldwide church than a utopian community. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is now the fourth largest denomination in the United States and counts more than 13 million members worldwide. There are now 145 Mormon temples existing or under construction throughout the world.[2]

The continuing impact of temples and Smith's plat on Mormon settlements in the West reveals the importance and adaptability of such concepts in community building. The ongoing implementation of grids and cities centered around temples not only provided Mormons with a sense of continuity and connection to the past, but it embodied profoundly held spiritual beliefs of a community. The Nauvoo temple was a tangible reality in the Saints' lives. It is difficult to overstate its impact on Mormon believers both individually and collectively. As a physical building, the temple focused the community's financial resources, labors, and physical and emotional energies toward a common goal. It was a concrete symbol of their identity, achievements and potential. But for believers, the temple was far more than four walls of stone and mortar. The temple was the

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[2] Eileen W. Lindner, ed. *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, 2007* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007); "The House of the Lord," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. <<http://www.lds.org/temples/ >>, 9 December 2008.

representation of God's kingdom on earth, of his restored gospel and of his chosen people. Such concepts transcended the temporal, and gave the Saints a sense of mission, meaning and direction. While they had to leave their city and temple behind, the kingdom of God remained with them. Though they had to abandon their promised land, they were still Zion, God's chosen people, and they would go on to build other cities after the pattern of Zion in the West. More than shared physical space, these are the bonds that held the Mormon community together.

The post-Nauvoo history of Icarianism is one of slow fragmentation and decline. The schism of 1856 forever weakened the Icarian movement. Following Cabet's expulsion from Nauvoo he and his followers established another community at Cheltenham near St. Louis, Missouri. Cabet's almost immediate death left the new community without a leader and crippled in their attempts to assert their legitimacy as the true Icarian community. They managed to eke out an existence for a few more years, but they were plagued by debt and dwindling numbers until the final fifteen members dissolved the community in January 1864.[3] The majority found greater prosperity and longevity than their brothers in Missouri, but they never realized the same level of success as in the early years in Nauvoo.

After the schism of 1856, the majority in Nauvoo decided to liquidate their assets at Nauvoo and move to the colony in Iowa, which had been purchased and begun a few years before, and which was intended to be the permanent Icarian community. Corning, Iowa, was a remote community dependent on agriculture. It became moderately successful, especially with the increasing prices of foodstuffs during the Civil War.

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[3] Sutton, *Les Icariens*, 114.

Corning was laid out on the same plan as Nauvoo with a central dining room surrounded by workshops and lodgings. By the mid-1870s, conflict again rocked the community. This time the split was between the older generation and a group of young Icarians and newer members who were pushing for reforms, including the vote for women. Irreconcilable differences led to another division in Icaria and two autonomous communities were formed, "Young Icaria" composed of the young revolutionaries and "New Icaria" or the older conservatives. They divided the land equally into east and west portions and lived separately. Young Icaria floundered, and by 1881 many of its members had left. Some of them formed a short-lived community in California called Icaria-Speranza, which was dissolved in 1886. The New Icaria continued to limp along with continually dwindling numbers until the last eight members legally dissolved the community on 22 October 1898.[4]

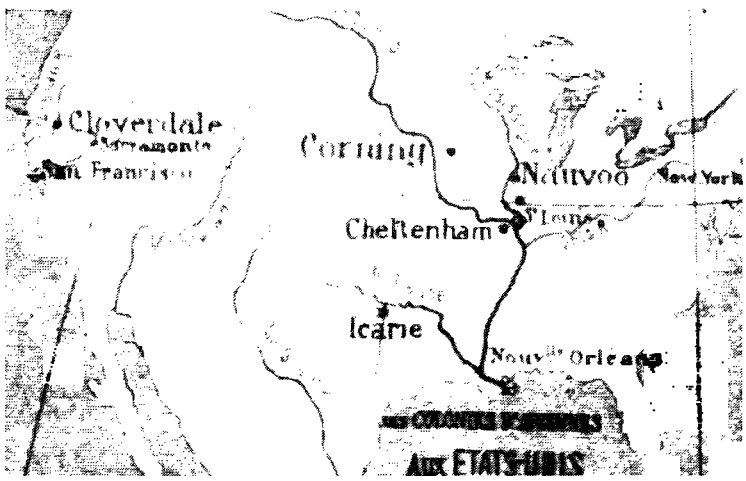

Figure 37 Icarian Communities in the United States. Courtesy Western Illinois University Special Collections.

And Nauvoo still remains—a sleepy town on the banks of the Mississippi. Nauvoo has continued to be an important element of the Mormon collective consciousness, and in the twentieth century, Mormons began efforts to recapture their heritage there. Interestingly, the first monument in Nauvoo, erected in 1933 at the instance of the current prophet, George Albert Smith, recognized the women in Nauvoo

[4] Ibid., 144.

by commemorating the founding of the Relief Society.[5] Women, who were still overlooked in official histories of the period, inaugurated the rekindling of Mormon interest in Nauvoo and marked the beginning of a renewed Mormon presence in Nauvoo. Three years later the LDS Church obtained the temple lot, which was purchased for $1100.[6] J. Leroy Kimball, descendent of Mormon leader Heber C. Kimball, began the restoration efforts in 1954 when he bought and restored his great-grandfather's house. This eventually led to the formation of Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. with authority to buy and restore buildings under the direction of the First Presidency.[7] Today the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owns scores of buildings and approximately 1,500 acres in Nauvoo. The town is a sort of Williamsburg of the Midwest, where thousands of tourists every year tour the approximately twenty restored and reconstructed buildings and learn about the Mormon experience in Nauvoo from volunteer missionaries.[8]

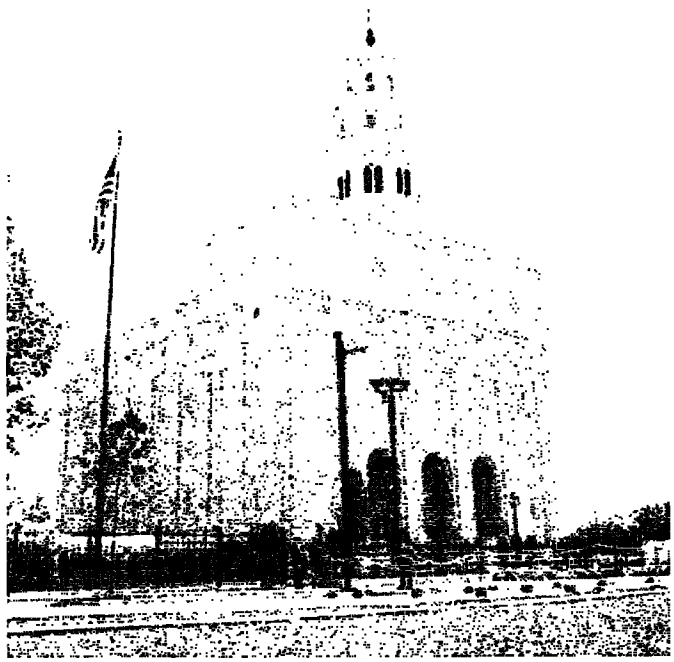

Figure 38 The Rebuilt Nauvoo Temple during the open house 2002. Photograph by the author.

Interest in Nauvoo reached a fever pitch when President Gordon B. Hinckley announced the reconstruction of the Mormon temple in April 1999. The building was

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[5] Leonard, 657.
[6] C. Michael Trapp, Interview, Nauvoo, Illinois, 1 November 2006.
[7] Gabbert and Candido, 43-44; Leonard, 659.
[8] Trapp, Interview.

constructed according to the original plans to look just like the original temple. The new Nauvoo temple was dedicated in June of 2002, and it attracted over 330,000 visitors during an open house preceding the dedication.[9] The landmark temple looms up once again from the bluff overlooking the Mississippi—a tangible symbol of community, conviction and faith. In rebuilding the temple that was at the center of life in Nauvoo, members of the Mormon Church have recaptured a unique moment in their history that embodies the essence of the Mormon faith and fight for survival and have transformed a monument or suffering and persecution into a symbol of return and regeneration.

A less visible but important presence in Nauvoo is that of the Community of Christ, the church formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which has maintained an important presence in Missouri and Illinois. The RLDS church maintained ownership of some of the most important of the Nauvoo buildings, including Joseph Smith's Mansion House where they began conducting tours as early as the 1910s.[10] Today they own most of Joseph Smith's original buildings—the Smith log home known as the Homestead, the Mansion House, and the Nauvoo House. They have also reconstructed the prophet's Red Brick Store, the site of the organization of the Relief Society and of the first temple ordinances. The RLDS church has built a visitor's center, which houses many artifacts, including one of the few remaining sunstones from the original Nauvoo Temple.

The Icarians haven't fared as well in contemporary Nauvoo. After leaving Nauvoo for Iowa, the Icarians sold all of their buildings. Many became residences. The

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[9] Gabbert and Candido, 43.
[10] Trapp, Interview.

refectory was used as a city hall and then as an opera house; it burned down in 1938.[11] The Icarian apartment buildings were turned into houses and were finally removed by Wilford Wood, the man who purchased the temple lot, in the 1950s.[12] The Icarian school had the longest history. In the second half of the nineteenth century it served as the town post office. In 1918 Catholics bought it for use as a parochial school. For a short time it was known as the Icarian Restaurant and Lounge before being purchased by the Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints for use as a visitor's center. It was razed in 1972, and with its destruction the last vestige of Icaria was erased from Nauvoo.[13]

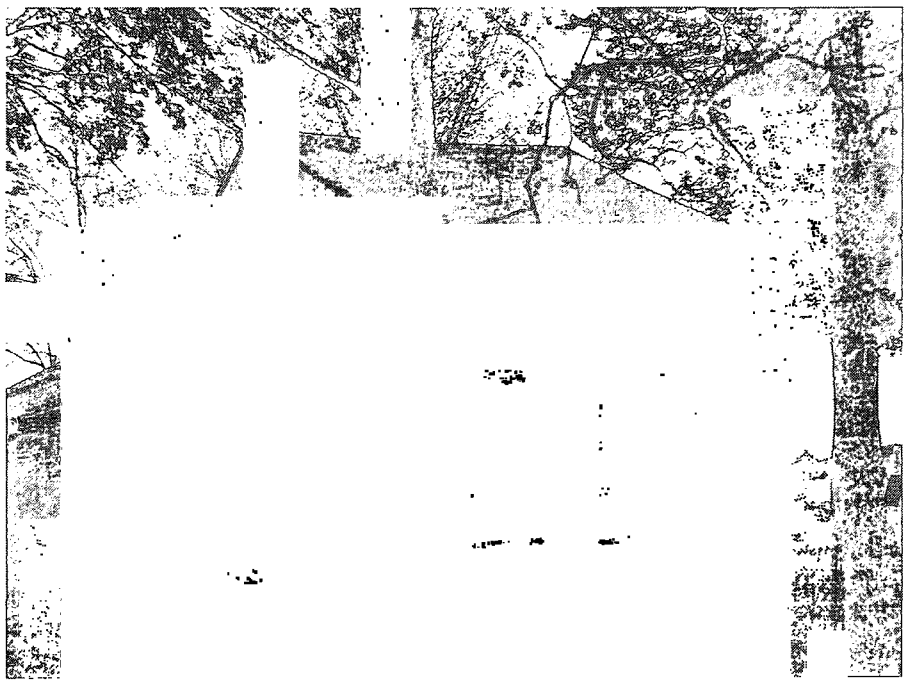

Figure 39 The Mix Home, ca. 1846, formerly the Icarian Museum. Photograph by the Author.

[11] Iowa State Historical Library Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[12] Land and Records Office miscellaneous; Iowa State Historical Library Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois.
[13] Iowa State Historical Library Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Center for Icarian Studies, Leslie F. Malpass Library, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois; *History of Hancock County*, 414.

Icaria today is represented by a plaque erected by the Illinois Historical Society in 1975. The careful tourist will notice a sign directing the interested seeker to a few buildings on the outskirts of town. The Mix home, built in 1846, was purchased by Icarian descendent and scholar Lillian Snyder and became the Icarian Living History Museum in 1988.[14] When funding became a problem, Lillian moved the museum to her barn, which displayed a few Icarian artifacts—wooden *sabots* or shoes, some tools and a numbered chair from the refectory. Lillian Snyder ran the makeshift museum for many years, but she passed away in 2005 at the age of ninety. Lillian hoped her estate would enable the continued existence of Icaria in Nauvoo, and she planned to turn her home into a permanent Icarian museum. Unfortunately her estate is currently embroiled in legal battles, and the only evidence of Icaria is a faded and crooked sign nailed to a tree outside of Lillian's now empty house.

When Cabet left Nauvoo with his remaining followers, he declared, "We arrived at Nauvoo hoping to establish heaven on earth, instead we find that we have created hell."[15] Any attempt at creating utopia is fraught with tension between the real and the ideal. It is precisely these tensions, and the effort to overcome them, that makes utopian communities so instructive and relevant, regardless of their final outcome. Nauvoo was an attempt by imperfect humans to realize a perfect world. The quest for perfection, performed spatially, in the crafting of new communities and landscapes, had a profound effect on those within the communities and a lasting effect on the space they inhabited.

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[14] "Obituary of Lillian Snyder, NIHS Founder," National Icarian Heritage Society, << http://nihs.info/>>, 6 October 2008.
[15] Vallet, 36.

This same impulse for perfection, for making things better, is a fundamental part of the human enterprise and continues to shape the spaces around us.

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